

# THE RAS REPORT

25 October, 2020



Literal Communist Propaganda

## The Ballot Will Not Save Us

Written by RAS Cadre

Gallons of ink have been spilled on the subject of voting. The analysis has remained steadfast and unchanging. Still, we have been presented with many reasons why we *should be voting*—why electoral reform is a necessary and credible portion of a socialist program—over and over again. Whenever the bourgeois masters trot out their parade of bankers, career politicians, and imperialists we are told to rally around the flag and put our ballots in the box. We are instructed again and again that we need to band together to defeat the present right-fascist by electing the left-fascist, as if our votes have any meaning at all.

That “analysis” is flawed. It flies in the face of a century of socialist theory. It flies in the face of reason and logic. It requires one to take the lies of the bourgeois republic at face value, the two biggest ones being that the masses of the people have any control over what their government does, and that the two bourgeois parties meaningfully diverge when it comes to common elements of fascism. Some will cry that the left-liberal position is merely proto-fascist, and that we must prefer the Strasser Brothers to Mussolini. Others will go even farther and demand that

we participate in the sham elections in order to legitimize our own position among the left-liberals and install a truly socialist candidate.

These are fairy tales.

The proto-fascist and the open fascist are equally hostile to a resurgent class consciousness. They share the same goals: the utter defeat of communism, the destruction of any power won by the working class, “restarting” the economy even while the plague is ravaging the country, sending children back to school in environments certain to spread COVID to poor and colonized people, the continued repression of Indigenous people and reduction of their sovereignty to ever-smaller territories, ongoing war abroad and genocide at home, the perpetuation of a brutal war of occupation using the garrison-police... the list of commonalities is too long to enumerate and encompasses nearly their entire party platforms. The differences between the proto-fascists and the fascists can be stated more simply, that is: “civility” in discourse, nominal rights for bourgeois and petit-bourgeois imperial gay people, colonized people, and white women.

There are other counter-arguments. “It costs nothing to vote” is a common one. While that is almost technically true (it does cost a marginal amount of time to do so), it runs counter to our injunction to destroy faith in the

bourgeois state. Many of those advocating for voting, however, don’t stop there; they also ask that we spend time and money to support the campaigns of the bourgeois politicians to ensure they win. All of this effort could better and more efficiently be put to use in the service of literally any revolutionary party in the empire.

Even if the electoralists were right on all the other points—even if there were a candidate who would be more favorable to our establishment of a decolonized socialist republic—this ignores the most salient and important fact: at this stage, voting will not matter. The rightists have so surely secured for themselves the entire electoral apparatus that, vote for Biden or not as you will, it will make no impact.

## Communism Can Never Be Established Through Reforms

The errors of Kautsky and Bernstein echo down through the ages: the attempt to harness capitalism and reform it into democratic socialism has ever been the cry of anti-communist renegades. It has been one hundred years since the deviations of the Kautskyites. Where is socialism? The increased flow of credit hasn’t eased market crises. As Comrade Luxemburg predicted, it has *merely exacerbated them*.<sup>1</sup> There is no cure for the systemic boom and bust of capitalism.

1. “Credit not only aggravates the crisis in its capacity as a dissembled means of exchange, it also helps to bring and extend the crisis by transforming all exchange into an extremely complex and artificial mechanism that, having a minimum of metallic money as a real base, is easily disarranged at the slightest occasion.” Rosa Luxemburg, *Reform or Revolution*, Chapter II.

This is intrinsic, essential, to its nature. Capitalism cannot be saved from itself, nor can it “peacefully” transition into socialism.

“The production relations of capitalist society approach more and more the production relations of socialist society. But on the other hand, its political and juridical relations established between capitalist society and socialist society a steadily rising wall. The wall is not overthrown, but is on the contrary strengthened and consolidated by development of social reforms and the course of democracy. Only the hammer blow of revolution, that is to say, the conquest of political power by the proletariat can break down this wall.”<sup>2</sup>

Indeed, Comrade Luxemburg goes on in *The Dreyfus Affair* to state clearly and unequivocally that “[t]he entry of a socialist into a bourgeois government is not, as it is thought, a partial conquest of the bourgeois state by the socialists, but a partial conquest of the socialist party by the bourgeois state.”<sup>3</sup> Here she is specifically referring to attempts to elect socialist ministers to executive offices of the ministry in Germany. She further warns that the “social reforms that a minister who is a friend of the workers can realize have nothing, in themselves, of socialism; they are socialist only insofar as they are obtained through class struggle.”<sup>4</sup> That is, reforms enacted by a bourgeois government will have a class character that reinforces that bourgeois government. Although it is possible to force a bourgeois government to enact reforms that will have

a socialist class character, this must be done by the presence of heightened class struggle. It is accomplished by the proletariat taking direct action and forcing the bourgeois state to act.<sup>5</sup>

It is not only Comrade Luxemburg who warns us thusly. No, indeed, for Comrade Lenin writes that “if ‘we’ desire to be front-rank democrats, we must make it our concern to direct the thoughts of those who are dissatisfied only with the conditions of the university, or in the Zemstvo, etc., to the idea that *the entire political system is worthless*. We must take upon ourselves the task of organizing an all-round political struggle under the leadership of the Party in such a manner as to make it possible for all oppositional strata to render their fullest support to the struggle and to our Party.”<sup>6</sup> Comrade Lenin meant by this that we should do everything we can to engender hatred and distrust of the bourgeois government, and that we should show that it cannot accomplish the reforms it promises.

James Connolly directed the question of reform directly to the United States empire in his pamphlet *Ballots, Bullets, Or—* in which he wrote:

[E]ven if the capitalist class were law-abiding enough, or had miscalculated public opinion enough, to wait until the socialists had got a majority at the ballot box in some presidential election, they would then refuse to vacate their offices, or to recognize the election, and with the Senate and military in their hands would calmly proceed

to seat those candidates for President, etc., who had received the highest vote from the capitalistic electorate. As to the first of these probabilities, the issue upon which a socialist success at the ballot box can be averted from the capitalist class is already here, and I expect at any time to see it materialise. It is this: we have often seen the capitalist class invoke the aid of the Supreme Court in order to save it some petty annoyance by declaring unconstitutional some so-called labour or other legislation. Now I can conceive of no reason why this same Supreme Court cannot be invoked to declare unconstitutional any or all electoral victories of the socialist party. Some may consider this far-fetched. I do not consider it nearly as far-fetched as the decision which applied the antitrust laws solely to trade unions, or used the Inter-State Commerce Acts to prevent strikes upon railways.<sup>7</sup>

Other “socialists” have tried the path of reformism. We are scientific socialists, dedicated to learning from our mistakes and the mistakes of others, to studying history and identifying where paths forked and theory diverged from actual practice. We do not hold on to a dogma and take it, unquestioningly, as the truth. No socialist in the imperial core has ever had success with reformism. The best they have done is become allies with the capitalists, attach themselves to the bourgeois state, and begin administering as bourgeois ministers.

Take the so-called “Nordic socialists” of our day. They operate white supremacist states in the heart of the neoliberal European Union project. The exploitation of a “Nordic socialist” state is, if anything, more brutal

2. Rosa Luxemburg, *Social Reform or Revolution*, chapter IV (1899).

3. Rosa Luxemburg, “The Dreyfus Affair and the Millerand Case,” *Cahiers de la Quinzaine* no. 11 (1899).

4. *Ibid.*

5. For example, Comrade Engels writes in *The Origin of Family, Private Property, and the State* that “periods occur in which the warring classes balance each other so nearly that the state power as ostensible mediator acquires, for a moment, a certain degree of independence of both.” (1884).

6. V.I. Lenin, *What Is To Be Done? Burning Questions of Our Movement* (1902).

7. James Connolly, “Ballots, Bullets, Or—”, *The International Socialist Review* (1909).

than that of their capitalistic counterparts. Their “socialists” in government have become Bismarcks, promising social safety nets for their people while obeying the crudest form of European chauvinism. Their “model” is no model at all. Although we, as communists, as Marxist-Leninists, support liberationary nationalism against imperial, capitalist powers, if you ask one of these “Nordic socialists” who their so-called socialism is for, it is for their own nation alone. Do their states engage in internationalism? No. They engage in brutal chauvinism.

Nor are the Nordic states “socialistic” by any measure. They are not engaged in socialist construction. The Nordic Model maintains a market economy. It has a welfare state, which was first pioneered not by a socialistic government but by the powerful Imperial Prussia under Bismarck and continued by the non-socialist Weimar Republic, which crushed and killed communists. Social services are provided for by taxes. There are no minimum wages set. The tax rates are very high, but ownership of all the productive property remains in the hands of private investors. They

have no desire, no plan, to transfer the means of production into the hands of the workers. This is not socialism. This is not socialist construction. This must be rejected outright.

Has any state reformed itself into a socialist state? Never. In the Global South, there have been some elections in which socialists (Marxist-Leninists, Chavismos, and Indigenous socialists) have taken power.<sup>8</sup> What makes these states different from the imperial core? In the periphery, there are other powerful revolutionary classes that can come into alignment with the socialists. One of these is the *national bourgeoisie*. These bourgeoisie are for national liberation and self-determination from the imperial colonizing powers, not for socialism, and will make temporary alliances with socialists to achieve liberation. But there can be no national bourgeoisie in the core: they do not want self-determination, for they already have it. They are not divided into national and comprador bourgeoisie, but rather are united as the *imperial bourgeoisie*, exploiting the entirety of the rest of the planet.<sup>9</sup>

Yet, it is not theory alone that drives us to say there can be no change through electoralism. It is also the state of the empire, its developing material conditions, as the fascist consolidation grows nearer to completion. The vote, if it ever had any power, has been utterly robbed of it.



## Revolutionary Poetry

Written by RAS Cadre

### *Swaying Cords*

The cord grass shifts and rustles  
neither day nor night  
I stand staring  
Gazing upon a never ending field  
A sea of deepest green  
The insects hum and chirp  
Dancing and living within their paradise

I stand staring  
Within the sea of deepest green  
Within the domain of insects  
Merely a simple envoy to them

The untamed sea  
Sways and tussles  
I feel a familiar longing  
A desire long tamed and beaten  
Of hands  
Of self  
Of acceptance

8. Namely: Chile (Allende), Venezuela (Chavez), and Bolivia (Morales).

9. For more on the revolutionary potential of classes other than the proletariat, a study of the PRC will reveal that the national bourgeoisie of China were enlisted to assist in the construction of the People's Republic.

### **The Vote is Toothless**

#### **I. Voter Suppression**

Active voter suppression is as old as the empire. By the law of the original colonies, voting was restricted to propertied white men. There were occasions on which the wealthy, to gain support for their candidates, would temporarily enfranchise landless men

to add them to the voter pool by giving them freeholds that were revoked immediately after the election. Nor was the record very much better after the War of Independence. Most states had property requirements that disenfranchised half or more of the white men living there. We all know of the hideous 3/5ths compromise, the fact that slaves could not vote, nor could women, natives, etc.

“But that has nothing to do with the world of today!”<sup>10</sup> the defenders of the bourgeois settler-democracy will shout. “We are enfranchised now, and that’s what matters.” But how far does that franchise extend? In many states it is difficult or even impossible for felons to vote.<sup>11</sup> Disenfranchisement in the US south didn’t need to rely on felonies: the traditional reliance on poll taxes and voting tests have been replaced by voter ID laws and the closure of polling places. We all know someone who advocates to restrict the franchise even further. These eugenicists will sneer that there are people who are “too stupid” to vote, that the franchise should only be available if you’ve finished high school, or even that voting should be reserved for land owners as it generally was at the time of the War of Independence.

This sentiment runs strong in our country. Voter suppression is a way of life.

Every expansion of the franchise has come as a result of *bloody class struggle*. Slaves were enfranchised not through some altruistic white Northerner deciding it should be so. They were enfranchised by generations of underground warfare against southern planters, by the agitation of Reconstruction radicals, by the Sharecropper’s Union, by the Freedom Riders, and by the continued struggle in the south. Expansion of the franchise to white women was made through the constant agitation of those women, marching, rioting, derailing of trains, planting of bombs, etc. *The ruling power of this country has never made concessions to weakness; they have only made concessions to strength.* These were merely the measures required to win the vote. As we are now seeing, *continual expressions of power are required to keep it.* The ruling class will exercise every prerogative it has to claw back the expansion of the franchise. It has already done so in the last half-century, reversing the historic gains of the voting rights activists.

The Federal Government made an effort to combat voter suppression (when the power of the masses required it to) by crafting and passing the Voting Rights Act of 1965. This act explicitly prohibited racial discrimination in voting. The heart of the VRA was aimed at the southern states

that had escaped Reconstruction with their racist electoral systems intact.<sup>12</sup> These were the so-called “special provisions” of the VRA, one of the most important of which was the preclearance provision. For a generation after its passage, the VRA prevented certain jurisdictions<sup>13</sup> from changing their electoral laws without the pre-approval of a federal representative in that jurisdiction. This prevented those districts from enacting new poll taxes, tests, etc., and disenfranchising poor and colonized voters. In 2013, under President Barack Obama, the US Supreme Court ruled that the coverage formula was unconstitutional because it violated the statutory canons of state sovereignty and federalism, couched as “state’s rights.”<sup>14</sup>

Even the bourgeois opponents of the right-liberal fascists in the US government recognize the ending of the VRA’s preclearance coverage to have made an enormous impact on the voting landscape. Since the decision in *Shelby County*, more than 1600 polling places have been closed across the country. The vast majority were in oppressed communities. Voter ID laws have been instated in broad swaths across the former VRA preclearance territory and in the black belt. This is part of a studied plan of right-liberal fascist consolidation in this country to disenfranchise colonized peoples and

10. Never mind that as late as 1938, the state of Alabama required a two-year residency period to vote in state elections and all applicants to vote had to be able to prove they could read and write any passage of the Constitution as well as prove they had been working for most of the preceding twelve months. Robin Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe* (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 182.

11. 6.1 million Americans cannot vote as a result of a felony conviction. 1 of 13 African Americans has had their right to vote stripped by felony disenfranchisement laws. 1 in every 56 non-black voters have been disenfranchised. In the last forty years, the U.S. jail & prison population has ballooned by 500%, creating a vast population of formally disenfranchised people. See, e.g., *The Sentencing Project: Felony Disenfranchisement*, <https://www.sentencingproject.org/issues/felony-disenfranchisement/> (accessed August 20, 2020).

12. It should be noted that Reconstruction, a rare progressive plan to oversee the former slave states by placing federal troops in their borders and directly administering them as federal garrisons, was ended by the progressive party as part of a deal between bourgeois factions to secure power, allowing the repressive planter governments in the south not only to regain power, but to redouble their control of their states and resources. The transgressions of the post-Reconstruction south are too numerous to mention in this piece, but we may list a few: the slaughter at Camp Hill, the Scottsboro trials and numerous other show trials of black southerners, the murder of Communist organizers in Alabama throughout the ‘30s and ‘40s, the murder of Emett Till, and on, and on.

13. Specifically, the most repressive. All voting jurisdictions were subjected to a two-part test: if they had used a test or device to restrict registration to vote as of November 1, 1964, ‘68, or ‘72 and less than half of the jurisdictions citizens were registered to vote or had actually voted in the presidential election of those same years. This formula caused the VRA’s special provisions to cover the entire states of Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, California, Connecticut, Idaho, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, and Wyoming as well as Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Virginia under different portions of the test.

14. *Shelby County v. Holder*, 570 US 529 (2013).

prevent the left-liberals from wooing them. *This was not a strategy designed to disenfranchise socialists.* The US government is so far beyond caring about a socialist electoral victory that we are not even on its radar. However, the resultant changes are enabling fascist consolidation and throwing the outcome of any general election farther and farther into the camp of the right-bourgeoisie.

In 2019, it was revealed to the public that the right-liberals had been engaged in a long, studied plan of redistricting and gerrymandering in former VRA-protected regions. This began before the VRA was gutted and intensified once the *Shelby County* decision was handed down by the US Supreme Court.<sup>15</sup>

Since the Trump presidency began, there have been increased efforts to engage in mass voter suppression.<sup>16</sup> We have all seen the bipartisan attempts to shut down or privatize the postal service. The right-liberals have been attempting to put an end to mail-in ballots in an effort to suppress voting this year. The COVID pandemic and the coming housing crisis will only exacerbate the administration's effort to suppress the vote of colonized peoples and the entire proletarian class.

## II. Housing Crisis

The United States empire is facing

an unprecedented crisis in rent and housing. Each year in the United States empire, the landlord fraction of the bourgeois class evicts nearly four million people.<sup>17</sup> Evictions that will proceed as a result of COVID-19 are over the number of evictions the empire normally processes in ten years.<sup>18</sup> At the time this article is published, it is likely that this process will be well underway, if not nearly complete.

Obviously, the most awful and primary effects of this crisis will be to throw entire families into the street, to dislocate them altogether from the constellation of imperial domestic life. The current houseless population of the US is estimated at .2 per-cent of the total population, or 552,830 people.<sup>19</sup> The infrastructure of the United States already cannot handle this number of houseless people (by design). The number of people who will be made houseless by the eviction crisis is an order of magnitude greater. The entire houseless infrastructure will be overwhelmed. The careful efforts of some regions to "social distance" will be for nothing. There will be no social distancing for those who are cast out to live in parks, on streets, and in the public spaces of the empire.

But how will this affect the 2020 election? All states are required, by the Help America Vote Act (42 U.S.C. 146) to have a first-time voter display

a current valid photo identification or a copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or any other government document showing the name and address of the voter.<sup>20</sup> The following states have laws that require identification be presented at the polls and that also require that ID to have a current address: Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Connecticut, Colorado, Delaware, Missouri, Montana, North Dakota, Ohio, and Virginia.<sup>21</sup> More than that, thirty-six states require identification of some form or other.<sup>22</sup>

In order to register to vote, houseless people may record a shelter address as a place they can receive mail.<sup>23</sup> However, newly houseless people may also be required to register to vote from their new, houseless address.<sup>24</sup> You must update your voter registration when you move.<sup>25</sup> We should expect purges of voters from all rolls, but more heavily from so-called "blue" states that reliably vote for the left-liberal fraction.

This does not even begin to account for the presence of active suppression at the polls, those poll-watchers and liberal busybodies who will attempt to disenfranchise houseless people at the very place of voting. This also does not address the incredible stresses of becoming houseless and the likelihood that, even if the region of the empire in which they dwell were to take great pains to permit houseless people to vote, they would be unable to do so because of other, environmental stressors.

No matter what happens, if the housing crisis is not solved, it will be the least legitimate election of any of the bourgeois republic's very illegitimate elections in its history, and will likely result in further fascist consolidation.

15. For more see, e.g., David Daily, "Memos Reveal the Scope and Racial Animus of GOP Gerrymandering Ambitions," *The Intercept*, (Sept. 27, 2019).

16. The Governor of Tennessee, Bill Lee, signed a bill that would strip protesters of their right to vote by making certain protesting offenses into felonies. Tal Axelrod, "Tennessee governor signs bill increasing punishment for certain protests," *The Hill* (Aug. 21, 2020).

17. Core Logic. *United States Residential Foreclosure Crisis: Ten Years Later* (2017).

18. That is, the empire will be processing 30-40 million evictions. Emily Benfer, David Robinson, et al., "The COVID-19 Eviction Crisis," *The Aspen Institute* (Aug. 7, 2020).

19. The Council of Economic Advisors, *The State of Homelessness in America* (Sept. 2019).

20. *Voter Identification Requirements*, National Conference of State Legislatures (Jul. 9, 2020).

21. *Id.*

22. *Ibidem*.

23. "Voting and Homelessness," NonprofitVOTE, <https://www.nonprofitvote.org/voting-in-your-state/special-circumstances/voting-and-homelessness/> (accessed Aug. 22, 2020).

24. Kristin Toussaint, "How the COVID-19 housing crisis could affect voter participation," *Fast Company* (Jul. 21, 2020).

25. "I have recently moved, am I still eligible to vote?," *U.S. Election Assistance Commission: Voter FAQs*, EAC.gov.

### III. The Polls May Be Closed and Guarded

We have already seen the mass closure of polling places, with COVID used as an excuse, during the left-liberal primaries. Closure of polling places does not actually protect anyone from the virus. In addition to making it more difficult to exercise the franchise, it will actually increase the incidence of COVID by forcing more people to concentrate in more confined spaces.<sup>26</sup>

Closure of polling places dovetails with the dismantlement of the USPS and the deployment of the PACT forces throughout the country. The Trump administration plans to curtail, destroy, or otherwise disregard votes taken through the mail with a sustained campaign of anti-postal office rhetoric. The idea of “voter fraud” has long been a bugbear of the right-liberals. This mania was enhanced by the left-liberal hysteria about “election tampering.” While it’s likely that these disparate but complimentary hysterics are merely the result of bourgeois intra-faction fighting (rather than a plan designed to defraud proletarian and petit-bourgeois voters), the effect is simple: to give the right-liberal fascists the pretext they need to suppress voting as “fraud.”

Indeed, President Trump stated that he would send police to monitor polling places during the election.<sup>27</sup> There is a high chance that not only federal marshals, but PACT, Homeland Security, ICE, and Customs and Border Patrol itself may be deployed to monitor polling places and intimidate colonized populations.

Trump will be suppressing the vote; the only question is how effective it will be, and what measures will be taken. It is even possible the election itself will be delayed or canceled altogether as a result of “voter fraud,” or in response to the pandemic.<sup>28</sup> Although the left-liberals continually crow that to do so would be “unconstitutional” or legally impossible, this is mere idealism. The material fact is that, if the President canceled the elections, there is nothing any Democrat or left-liberal would be able to do other than beg the Federal Courts (most of which have been filled with Trump appointees) to deploy federal DOJ enforcers, all of whom are now loyal to AG Barr.

### IV. The Next Great Depression

Above and beyond the housing crisis, COVID, and the deployment of federal “peacekeeping” troops, there will undoubtedly be a major crash of the US stock market and, following that, the global economy within the next few months. In fact, by the time of publication, this may already have occurred. While exploring the Marxian economics behind the almost-certain crash of the stock market are beyond the scope of this article, it is without doubt that the economic devastation produced by such a crash would have an effect on the election.

Fascism is the consolidation of bourgeois power—it is the fighting formation of the bourgeoisie. As the capitalist system enters a crisis, fascism will only gain in power. The left-liberals who claim to support a “democratic” system (and, indeed, who do

support the highly warped democracy of the bourgeois republic) will rapidly shift their support directly to the fascists when they realize their status as the ruling class is jeopardized by the market failure. This is the course that history has always taken: failure of the capitalist market leads to consolidation as the class-interests become clear.

### V. Conclusion

We cannot take this threat lightly. The US settler-empire is the greatest threat to peace, democracy, and stability the world has ever known. It will only become more dangerous if its form as a bourgeois republic reforms into an open fascist dictatorship. We cannot afford to waste our time with organizing for either the left- or right-liberal fascist candidate. We must instead organize for dual power and self-defense; now, more than ever, colonized communities need comrades-in-arms willing to sacrifice and die to protect them from the growing fascist menace.

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## Girls You Can Hit

**Written by RAS Cadre**

*Q. Why do fascists want to kill trans women?*

In a nine-day period between June 25 and July 3, six Black trans women—Brayla Stone, Merci Mack, Shaki Peters, Draya McCarty, and Tatiana Hall—were found murdered. The news barely made a ripple; Black trans women and trans women of color are murdered regularly—and no one is shocked, because the gender class structure is operating as usual. Liberal-individualist analysis claims that this is simply the result of amorphous personal “prejudices”—that individ-

26. See, e.g., the CDC guidelines for voting, *Considerations for Election Polling Locations and Voting*, CDC (Jun. 22, 2020).

27. “Are you going to have poll watchers?... Are you going to have an ability to monitor, to avoid fraud and cross check whether or not these are registered voters?” “We’re going to have everything,” Trump responded. “We’re going to have sheriffs, and we’re going to have law enforcement, and we’re going to have, hopefully, U.S. attorneys, and we’re going to have everybody, and attorney generals.” Luke Barr, “Trump says he wants police at polling sites. Experts say that’s unlawful,” ABCNews (Aug. 21, 2020).

28. Ian Millhiser, “No, Trump can’t delay the election,” Vox (Jul. 30, 2020).

ual men, fearful of the unknown or afraid of change, attack trans women for personal reasons.

This is both idealist and ahistorical, a comforting fantasy that naturalizes and atomizes the oppression of trans women as a class and protects the underlying gender class structure of the empire.

In fact, reactionaries make trans women a primary target. ICE imprisons trans women in special separate concentration camps under even worse conditions than cisgender men and women, and during protests, police subject captured trans women for especially brutal treatment. On July 25, a group of pro-police protesters outside Pittsburgh switched their chant from "all lives matter" to "kill transgenders" and "kill faggots." State power and reactionary elements target trans women specifically — *but why?*

Because the oppression of trans women as a class is critical to the gender class structure of the empire, and by centering the oppression of trans women in our material feminist analysis, we can understand that class structure much more clearly.

*Q. What is the gender class structure of the empire?*

Fundamentally, the gender class structure is built on the domination of white men over women; white women constitute a subordinated but privileged class under the control ("protection") of white men, and reactionary white manhood is ultimately defined in terms of control of women.

*Q. What is the role of trans women (and nonbinary transfeminine people, who are treated like trans women) in this gender class structure?*

Trans women, nonbinary transfeminine people, and feminine gay cisgender men are treated as a gender underclass. Structurally, they are "girls

you can hit." They are also subject to substantial sexual violence in the form of sexual assault and rape. Cisgender women from oppressed and colonized nations are treated more like "girls you can hit" if they are less acceptable as potential members of the "protected" class of potential wives and mothers.

Thus, Black and Indigenous women are treated disposably as "girls you can hit." Likewise, sex workers, who are seen as disqualified from the "protected" class of women, are "girls you can hit." The further they are from the "protected" class of women, the

more disposable they are, and they are treated more and more like trans women. This develops intersectionally as well; Black trans women are often accused of sex work to justify violent treatment, and Black trans women sex workers are murdered casually.

*Q. Why do cisgender men oppress trans women? In other words, how do cisgender men benefit materially from oppressing trans women?*

This dynamic arises in childhood, where they are an acceptable target for violence and covert sex ("practice girls") by boys trying to enact their

## THE PARTY FOR RECLAMATION AND SURVIVAL IS EXCITED TO ANNOUNCE OUR MATERIAL FEMINISM COURSE WILL BE OFFERED TO THE PUBLIC FOR A SECOND TIME, BEGINNING IN JANUARY 2021. REGISTRATION WILL OPEN IN MID-DECEMBER.



**Why do fascists want to know which women they can hit? What labor is extracted from women cis and trans? How can principled organizations avoid reproducing the imperial gender hierarchy? Join us to discuss the practice of material feminism.**

*"In capitalism sex can exist but only as a productive force at the service of procreation and the regeneration of the waged (male) worker and as a means of social appeasement and compensation for the misery of everyday existence."*

-Federici



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manhood. Men can gain status and an identity as controllers of women by hurting "girls you can hit." They "protect" (white, cis) women in the same way that the police "protect" communities: by enacting violence on the underclass, they gain control over the "respectable" class of women.

The threat to the women they control is supposed to be implicit, not enacted: "Serve me faithfully and you will never

be hurt the way I hurt those sissies in middle school." But the opposite side of the coin is that any "protected" woman who refuses

to comply in a serious and sustained way can be threatened with degradation to the underclass.

*Q. Why do cisgender women oppress trans women? In other words, how do cisgender women benefit materially from oppressing trans women?*

They get to not be treated like trans women, sex workers, and other "girls you can hit." Their respectable status is contingent on having an underclass they are not part of.

*Q. How does the oppression of trans men (and nonbinary trans masculine people, who are treated like trans men) fit into this gender class structure?*

The greatest threat to a trans woman's life is being treated like a trans woman. For trans men and nonbinary transmasculine people, the greatest threat to their lives is being treated like a cis woman. We can see this play out in fascist fantasies of "correcting"

trans men to become cis women, and in the way that transmisogynists like JK Rowling claim that "trans activists [code for trans women] are seducing your daughters into mutilating their healthy, fertile female bodies in an impossible attempt to become men." In fascist and reactionary rhetoric, trans men are framed as deluded, innocent cis women who have to be saved from a horrible error. In the material world,

this agenda often plays out in the form of corrective rape and other atrocities.

Trans men from colonized communities are treated much

more violently, as in the case of the murdered Tony McDade; there is no prospect of forcing them to be "protected" women, so they are treated disposably, like trans women.

*Q. How does trans women's liberation threaten the foundations of the empire? In other words, why do reactionaries want to wipe out trans women?*

The reactionaries are not mistaken to see the liberation of trans women (and sex workers) as linked to the liberation of cis women from colonized communities, nor is their targeting of trans women a mistake.

The liberation of trans women and "girls you can hit" in general would invert the gendered class structure of the empire and strike a critical blow to the control of "protected" women that reactionary men depend on for both social reproduction, personal exercise of power, and identity formation.

*Q. What are the implications for us?*

We must center the liberation of trans women, sex workers, and other "girls you can hit." This will immediately help to liberate cis women from colonized nations, remove the hierarchical power of "protected" white cis women over other women, degrade the power of white cisgender men over oppressed genders, and remove the basis for treating trans men and transmasculine people as deluded cis women.

## US Incarceration is Modern Day Slavery

Written by RAS Cadre

As Western and Midwestern states face unprecedented wildfires, the use of prison inmates as a source of free labor has again made headlines. These stories tend to focus not on the appalling state of the environment, or the tragedy of using inmate laborers in the first place; instead, they merely report that the COVID-19 crisis has reduced access to inmates to exploit.

How did we even get to a point where California's ability to fight fires depends on incarcerated labor? The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation firefighting program began as recently as 2016, with the largest program starting in 2018. These workers are offered a whopping \$2-\$5 per day, plus \$1/hour for their time and extreme risk. While still well under the federal minimum wage of \$7.25/hour, this is much higher than the average incarcerated worker's hourly pay, which is \$0.14-\$1.15/hour for most. South Carolina, Texas, Oklahoma, Michigan, Georgia, Florida, Arkansas, and Alabama actually pay prisoners nothing. In firefighting labor alone, these practices save the state of California more than \$90 million dollars each year. The es-

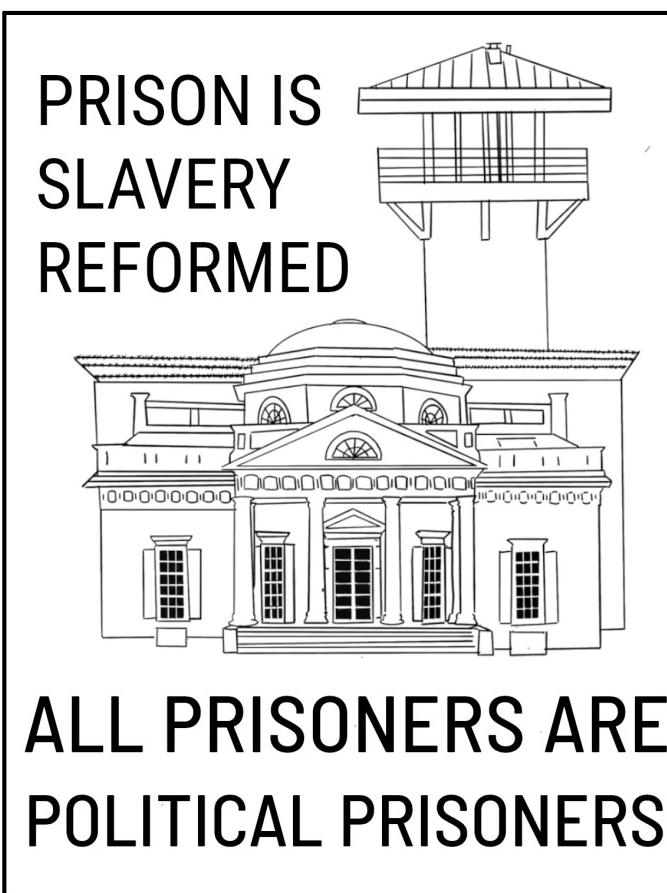
timated annual value of prison and jail industrial output is more than \$2 billion. UNICOR, the largest industrial “employer” of prisoners, controls the labor of 25% of federal prisoners. Their minimum pay is \$0.23/hour. For 2001, the most recent year with public data from the Prison Policy Initiative, UNICOR’s sales were \$583.5 million; the Department of Defense granted \$388 million and the United States Postal Service \$321 million in contracts and purchases from UNICOR. This is labor theft, and it is entirely legal under the current capitalist system. In fact, it is necessary for the continuation of this system, and for the rich who own the various companies that comprise the foundation of the modern prison-industrial complex. It is but another legally-sanctioned means for them to maintain and increase their wealth, status, and power.

This theft began with the settling and colonization of the so-called United States. The same amendment that allegedly freed enslaved people simply restructured the way in which their labor would be stolen. The 13th amendment reads in part: “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as punishment for a crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States...” This explicitly states that involuntary servitude and slavery are allowed as long as the person has been classified as a convicted criminal. Following the first U. S. Civil War, sets of laws called “black codes” were passed that criminalized common activities, thereby allowing for the re-enslavement

of Black people (particularly Black men). These codes authorized arrests for such infractions as loitering and being unemployed or houseless. Prisons initially stole this labor by leasing prisoners to the same plantations they had just been liberated from, as well as to hazardous industrial sites. In 1871, the Supreme Court of Virginia declared prisoners to be “slaves of the state.” Between 1885 and 1920,

in the U.S., participants are placed for work in outside facilities through the Prison Industry Enhancement Certification Program (P/ECP). Prison farms where prisoners are forced to do agricultural work, have expanded to include logging and operating fisheries. These essentially function as labor camps, and it is unclear towards which category (internal or external prison labor) these inmates are counted. Industrial work is flexible to the demands of capitalist society and corporations, and, prisoners have also been tapped to make hand sanitizer, toilet paper, gloves, paper gowns, masks, and other PPE (personal protective equipment). Arkansas inmates are now making masks for their corrections officers and local government workers for zero pay. Louisiana inmates are working in manufacturing plants, churning out hand sanitizer for \$0.40 per hour, but they will see almost none of that pay; Louisiana, as well as most other states, charge inmates to see the doctor, to get glasses, for room and board fees, and for such basics as toiletries, menstrual hygiene products and necessary medication. These charges

leave inmates in thousands of dollars of debt upon release. In addition, crowded manufacturing environments further expose these workers to the virus—there is no social distancing possible in prisons, and constant shuffling between various jobs multiplies their risk. They will be charged for their inevitable need for medical care, and their terms may become life sentences, in which they are killed by COVID, with no chance for release.



between 10,000 and 20,000 mostly Black prisoners endured this system of “convict leasing.”

Over time, as Amerikan culture and consumption trends shifted, so too did the type of work into which prisoners were sold. While just over half of incarcerated people engage in labor that contributes to the operation of the facility they inhabit, the other half are leased outside of their prisons. In roughly 40% of the 1,833 state prisons

In New York, for a generous \$6 an hour, federal prisoners are tapped to dig mass graves for COVID victims, a job which the Department of Corrections carefully notes is something they can “volunteer” for.

The majority of incarcerated laborers are engaged in factory production, ranging from hand sanitizer and PPE to office furniture, textiles (denim jeans for J. C. Penney and K-Mart and uniforms for McDonald's and Wendy's), home appliances, and the tools of imperial war. The federal prison industry produces fully 100% of all of the Amerika military's helmets, “war supplies” and uniform equipment. Several of UNICOR's 83 factories use inmate slave labor to make Patriot missile components for Raytheon and Lockheed Martin. More than 90% of the paints and paintbrushes made in the U.S. are made in UNICOR factories using penal labor. UNICOR, and other food factories using incarcerated laborers, produce all of the frozen beef patties, chicken patties, and proprietary breads for McDonald's and Wendy's, as well as other fast food chains. A small number of prisoners even staff call centers.

All of this atrocious treatment and labor theft is perpetrated without permitting prisoners any recourse to the law. The limited labor protections we enjoy as non-incarcerated people are entirely absent for prisoners. The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) do not apply. They are barred from collective bargaining, and OSHA safety regulations and protections are also denied to incarcerated workers. Uprisings in prisons due to intolerable conditions or work exploitation are squashed by any means necessary, and everyone in the prison is punished afterwards with rotten food, direct

abuse and assault, loss of the limited “privileges” they had before, and/or 24 hour lockdown to prevent further organizing.

The entire economic structure of the United States is predicated upon access to free labor from Black people. The system of chattel slavery accustomed white settlers to a culture where they felt entitled to an entire person and everything they could get from them. This contradiction, as old as Amerika itself, continues to push us towards another explosion as racism and discrimination for profit continues to pit us the working classes against one another. This country's carceral system is simply the current iteration of slavery—slavery reformed—and the continued racial element to the unique oppression perpetrated by prisons-for-profit cannot be separated from any conversation about prisons. In Virginia, 1 in 14 Black men are in prison—19% of the state's residents are Black—as compared to 58% of the prison population. Known for Williamsburg, Jamestown, and the founding of “Amerika,” Virginia is also home to the capital of the confederacy and some of the longest-standing discriminatory laws in the country. Their incarceration rate outpace even that of Amerika as a whole, and of every other “developed” nation on earth. The race-based theft of labor continues today, in and out of prisons, with a near 10% wage disparity between Black and white workers of the same skill sets and educational achievements.

The imperialist nation created a need for cheap military supplies, for cheap factory food and jeans, for fighting against fires caused by their own environmental degradation. It scrambles to fill these manufactured needs, at any cost. Exploitation for profit is

not only inherent to the system but critical for the function of the capitalist imperialist state that is both the historical and modern “United States.” It is racially biased by design and that racial bias is maintained, intentionally, by the white supremacist system. Every industry supported by incarcerated laborers operates at a profit margin that incentivizes the further incarceration of those proletarians who cannot

*The entire economic structure of the United States is based on access to free labor from Black people.*

access quality legal defense and appeals, which drives law enforcement to kidnap more and more people into the system. Goods produced by prisoners, sold to the people and businesses that keep the every day operations of the country functioning, are found in every home, every stomach, every office, and every school in Amerika. The non-incarcerated proletariat class is overcharged for goods produced by people they are taught to look down upon, and we are taught this because solidarity with our incarcerated and lumpenproletariat siblings, in which we collectively divest from the current capitalist system, will necessarily lead to its demise.

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## Indigenous Day Portland Oregon

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**Written by RAS Cadre**

The weekend before Indigenous Day right-wing groups descended upon Portland, Oregon.

Mostly, it was a staging. They were protected by the police even though they were not permitted to use space. They stole a work of art that was erect-

ed by those standing with Black Lives Matter and took a photo of themselves with it.

It is typical for the local antifascists to identify the individuals responsible and dox them to employers, the public etc. I reached out to the local antifa-

### *Statues of Theodore Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln were removed.*

cists through social media to verify this, but they didn't respond by the time of this report. Through research I discovered that the weekend action was perpetrated mostly by Patriot Prayer, but many other groups were in attendance. I recognized from insignias and tells that Patriot Prayer, Constitutional Sheriffs, Patriot Movement (who are mostly just lumpen Trumpers), and of course, Proud Boys. Mostly, the action was a publicity stunt for optics. I haven't found any police reports through accessible sources that conflict with this assumption. The local news downplayed the seriousness of having fascists occupying the streets and even went as far to have puff pieces on individuals through interviews.

On Indigenous Day it was a very different scenario. A group of possibly 300 people descended upon the Historical Society and other parts of the city. Statues of Theodore Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln were removed. Windows were broken out by actioneers and it is reported that flares were thrown as well. This may be incorrect, but the media is reporting it.

The Mayor spoke out against the actioneers and then, in turn, each liberal politician did the same, with the local news critical of the actioneers as well. The event went on until about 2 AM when actioneers were forcibly

removed by police and a riot was declared, although this may have been more of a mundane routine than anything of substance.

Tana Snachez, an Oregon Reb and "Indigenous Leader," protected the Historical Society and dismissed the actioneers as "violent thugs." Other Indigenous voices on the subject have been silenced or not recorded as my research didn't find consenting voices.

It appears, from media accounts and public statements, that the liberals and the fascists have found some sort of alliance. The liberal political establishment is tiring of those demanding freedom from the tyranny of colonialism, and they may be using Portland

for this project by allowing the fascists free reign. The violence between the BLM protestors and the right-wing groups was mostly performative. The right was caught firing paint balls on counter protestors, but that seems to be all the damage they did. However, the mood on the street from work-a-day types is more fear and aggravation than solidarity. In one conversation with a person who lives on the street where this happened, I was told "I couldn't leave my apartment to get food, and I'm afraid to go outside." This may be because the media is portraying BLM and associated groups as terrorists, because the tide of liberal acceptance is diminishing, or both.



## Voting As Tacit Approval

Written by RAS Cadre

We find ourselves staring down the barrel of a gun. 2020 has seen naked fascism emerge in the United States as never before. While there has historically been an effort to cover the outright fascist nature of the United States, we now find that facade fading away to see the state for what it is—an organization of bourgeois class domination. This is done by economic means, through refusal to pass any meaningful support packages for struggling people, and by physical means, through the use of police, national guard, and military to subjugate the proletarian masses and crush rising unrest. This is nothing new. Every election cycle, we are subjected to laughable candidates who believe themselves fit for the position of absolute authority over the people of the United States, and indeed, the world. Finally, when the cycle comes to an end and the two political parties have chosen their candidates (usually someone openly racist vs. someone not so open, but racist nonetheless), we are expected to trot to our polling stations and cast a vote for one or the other. We are told time and again that our vote is crucial, that we are the ones that choose the fate of the country.

This is unequivocally false.

Let's jump back to the 2016 election. It's the end of a liberal golden era — a time of unending brunch and an eloquent man in the White House. The run up to the election revealed just how the democratic party operates. Bernie Sanders, a democratic socialist, was pushed out of the nomination and his progressive ideals were discarded. Instead, Hillary Clinton, one of the least popular politicians

in modern history, was inserted as the democratic candidate, along with a completely forgettable VP. News agencies and polling orgs predicted a landslide democratic victory, because who in their right mind would vote for Trump and his christo-fascist VP, Mike Pence? Well, it turns out a lot of people would. It is important to note that Hillary won the popular vote, but due to the way our system works, even when they get the most votes, the democrats can't win. I am not saying that Bernie would have won; I am not interested in that hypothetical, since democratic socialism is just a friendly-faced extension of capitalism. I have laid this out in order to illustrate this point: The two parties, being one-and-the-same, push for increased capitalist control and the further subjugation of the proletarian masses.

Now, back to 2020. We once again have two buffoons vying for the prize of ultimate power: A racist old man, and a different racist old man. If you have not come to this conclusion yet, I'm not going to waste time trying to convince you, and you should probably be reading something else. However, for those of you that are convinced that both of these men are utter garbage, why would you vote for either of them?

One reason that often gets thrown back at me is that voting is a form of "harm reduction," to which I respond by looking around and seeing exactly where voting has gotten us. Obama prosecuted a war in the Middle East by drone (launching 10 times more strikes than Bush, in fact), dropping bombs in 7 different countries. In 2016 alone, there were a total of 26,171 bombs dropped and Obama joked to his aids that he's "really good at killing people." Domestically, Obama utilized ICE in the same ca-

pacity as Trump, forcefully removing people from the country and keeping children in concentration camps. The only difference is that he had a little "D" next to his name during the campaign, so no one seemed to care. The list of his atrocities goes on; all this to say that the liberal years are not better than the conservative years. When the party that is supposedly good and humane perpetuates these atrocities, the idea of "harm reduction" crumbles. Amerika is the same regardless of who is at the helm: it is a monstrosity that consumes, leaving only death, destruction, and chaos in its wake.

The engine that keeps the Amerika monster running is capitalism. However, Amerika has taken the modes of capitalism and enhanced them through imperialism. Comrade Lenin wrote about this in State and Revolution: "The so-called Great Powers have long been exploiting and enslaving a whole number of small and weak nations. And the imperialist war is a war for the division and redivision of this kind of booty." Through wars and sanctions, America has slowly increased its grip on the nations of the global majority, installing yes-man puppet governments so that it can ensure access to resources for the imperial core. For no better example, I point to the Bolivian coup in November 2019, in which elections were contested by an Organization of American States backed right-wing group. For those unfamiliar with this organization, it is a group of Western Hemisphere states in North and South America that was designed to function as a bulwark against communism. The coup was able to seize power, ousting the legitimate president, Evo Morales. Fast-forward to July 24, 2020 in which a Twitter user confronted Elon Musk about Tesla's role in the coup and the subse-

quent seizing of Lithium resources (of which Bolivia has the world's largest deposits) to which Musk responded "We will coup whoever we want! Deal with it!" This is merely one of nearly innumerable examples where the western powers of capital move to crush legitimate socialist governments in order to seize material resources. That is the essence of imperialism.

With this in mind I ask again: why should we vote? The answer: We should not. Participation in bourgeois democracy is tantamount to the tacit approval of the actions of capital and empire. It does not matter which party you are voting for—they are one and the same. Eugene V. Debs identified this in his "This is Our Year" speech in 1912:

We are today entering upon a national campaign of the profoundest interest to the working class and the country. In this campaign there are but two parties and but one issue. There is no longer even the pretense of difference between the so-called Republican and Democratic parties. They are substantially one in what they stand for. They are opposed to each other on no question of principle but purely in a contest for the spoils of office. To the workers of the country these two parties in name are one in fact. They, or rather it, stands for capitalism, for the private ownership of the means of subsistence, for the exploitation of the workers, and for wage-slavery.

Both of these old capitalist class machines are going to pieces. Having outlived their time they have become corrupt and worse than useless and now present a spectacle of political degeneracy never before witnessed in this or any other coun-

try... To the extent that they control elections the franchise is corrupted and the electorate debauched, and when they succeed to power it is but to execute the will of the Wall street interests which finance and control them. The police, the militia, the regular army, the courts and all the powers lodged in class government are all freely at the service of the ruling class, especially in suppressing discontent among the slaves of the factories, mills and mines, and keeping them safely in subjugation to their masters.

Over a century ago, Debs had the right view of it; he correctly identified that both parties, rather than being in service to the electorate, served capital. Their goals are one and the same and because of that, they are the same party. Debs asks:

How can any intelligent, self-supporting wage-earner give his support to either of these corrupt capitalist parties? The emblem of a capitalist party on a workingman is the badge of his ignorance, his servility and shame.

I echo that question again in the 2020 election. When the options that are forced down our throats are a racist, fascist old man and his theocratic VP or a racist, fascist old man and his trans-hating cop VP, why should we kowtow to this system, let alone allow it to continue to exist?

There is another way. It is not easy. It is not peaceful. It is the only option if we are to survive:

Revolution. We must immediately begin shifting our attention and energy from the voting spectacle and instead direct it at establishing mutual aid programs and support networks.

Anything less is not enough, and anything approved by the empire is fascist in nature. We should reject both violently.

**To arms, comrades!**  
**We have work to do.**

## Regarding the History of the German Left

**Written by No Pasarán Hamburg**

German imperialism is defined by its defeats in the 20th century. In the face of these defeats, it has been forced to become ever more cunning, insidious, and cowardly. These conditions are also definitive for the left-wing movements here in the US. Over the course of the resistance struggle from 1933 to 1945, the revolutionary and anti-fascist movements lost thousands of fighters: In prisons and concentration camps, in the liberation struggle for the peoples of Spain, and in the resistance movements throughout the Soviet Union and all of Europe; many of the best fell. In contrast, through their defeat, the ruling classes lost their political and economic power—for a time. Only a few of their most aggressive and corrupt figures were convicted as war criminals, as their services were no longer deemed necessary due to megalomania. Those who remained found, in the victorious imperialist forces, new allies under whose leadership they could resume their struggle against communism and a strengthened Soviet Union. The imperialist victors had found a cadre tried and tested by all means — in the military, the police, secret services, the justice system, administration, media, and the fields of education and medicine.

After the breaking-up of the anti-Hitler coalition, West Germa-

ny (Federal Republic of Germany, *Bundesrepublik Deutschland*) was defined by politics which had the strategic goal of destroying every revolutionary movement within its borders. The aims of its foreign policy were to turn back all military, political, and social developments in East Germany (German Democratic Republic, *Deutsche Demokratische Republik*) and the other territories liberated by the Red Army since the end of the Second World War—or even those liberated by the October Revolution. This combination of (and dialectic between) militant anti-communism within the FRG and an aggressive anti-communist foreign policy and military strategy are essential to everything that has happened from 1945 onward, and they have been a determining factor in all of the struggles of the Left.

The history of the GDR is beyond the scope of this exploration, and its capitalist island of West Berlin within East German borders will go unexplored; we will deal solely with the history of the FRG. The borders of the GDR practically functioned as one large “picket line.” The hate and malice towards East Germany were (and are) foundational to the entirety of West German society. Even after the defeat of Hitlerite fascism, there still remained a predominant attitude of chauvinism, expansionism, a presumed entitlement to *Lebensraum* (“living space”) in the East, and master race ideations.

Members of the Communist Party of Germany (KPD), which after May 1945 was reconstituted as a legal political party, were painted as agents for Moscow or the GDR, and as a result faced slander, discrimination, loss of work, economic ruin, and incarceration until the renewed ban on the Party in 1956. Tens of thousands of

Party members and sympathizers were incarcerated and criminally charged; some of the judges were the same ones who had charged and sentenced them to the concentration camps during the Nazi period. Many were punished for Party activities that were carried out before the renewed ban. Even those who only harbored sympathies for communism or communists ran the risk of losing their livelihoods or being locked up. Anyone who traveled to East Germany or who collected newspaper articles regarding economic developments in the FRG was in danger of being brought to court as a spy.

The Federal Republic of Germany’s political program was conceptually McCarthyist, which was then implemented by the remaining fascists. The trade unions were weakened by the fact that right-wing union bosses received large sums of money from the CIA (see: “Germany made by the CIA”), resulting in the enactment of a work ban on all communist union members (*Unvereinbarkeitsklause*). In the same vein, many of the high-ranking right-wing members of the social democrats (SPD) were bought by the CIA.

Through these two mechanisms, the West German working class was totally in the clutches of anti-communism. All attempts by communists and anti-fascists to call for a democratic mobilization and protests against the re-militarization of West Germany were heavily suppressed by the justice system and the police.

Funding via the Marshall Plan made possible the so-called “economic miracle” (*Wirtschaftswunder*). The reconstruction of the West German economy, and through it the improvement of living conditions, weakened every anti-capitalist struggle, corrupting a majority of the West German work-

ing class: Whereas Hitler’s Volkswagen were only being driven along the frontlines in war time, with the help of the Marshall Plan, workers could actually afford their own VWs, followed by TVs, and not long after that their own trips to Italy. These all tied West Germany to NATO’s aggressive anti-Soviet strategy. With the FRG’s admission into NATO, the establishment of the *Bundeswehr* (the post-Wehrmacht military), and the transformation of West German territory into a launching pad for military operations against the socialist block—from the beginning of the 1960s, the FRG had been transformed into a frontline nation for US war strategy.

Anti-imperialist resistance was only marginal. Most West Germans believed they had the better life in comparison to East Germans; this sentiment is still harbored today. Their predisposition for anti-communism and Russophobia was solidified as the enduring state ideology with the help of all political and ideological state apparatuses. German culture has been completely steeped in these beliefs.

In the mid-1960s the first signs of a renewed resistance showed themselves as the federal government of the FRG began to implement the “state of emergency” laws, which were reminiscent of special decrees that allowed Hitler to cement his dictatorial powers. Due to honest depictions of imperialist crimes that still appeared in bourgeois media at the time, the solidarity movement built itself around the tricontinental struggles for national liberation. There were also the Turkish, Italian, Greek, Spanish, and Portuguese “guest workers”—all of whom were practically interned in West Germany and hyper-exploited—who brought knowledge of their countries and of their oppression to

Germany; all the while, the FRG offered massive support to fascist dictatorships across Europe.

Thus, the rising international revolutionary movement did not go completely unnoticed in West Germany. However, it was not by the working class that resistance and actions of solidarity were carried out, but by students, apprentices, and young and foreign workers—that is to say, by all those against whom the West German press and passersby would curse, “Just go to the East already!” The United States’ escalation in Viet Nam, a state visit from the fascistic Iranian Shah, and the brutal handling of demonstrators by police all lent themselves to an increased militancy at demonstrations.

By the end of the 1960s, this movement lost a considerable amount of members. A large chunk of those involved decided to build their careers by cooperating with imperialism. Some tried, without much success, to build political parties modeled off of those from the 1920s; an even smaller group sought to build an urban guerrilla movement in the style of contemporary Latin American groups. They, too, experienced

little success. The successors of the KPD, the German Communist Party (DKP), were wrapped up in the East-West conflict, and their politics were more oriented towards peacekeeping rather than a revolutionary struggle against imperialism. Simply put, the revolts of the 1960s in Germany went the same way as those in the other imperialist countries.

In the 70s and 80s there was a significant political and ideological decline.

*Simply put, the revolts of the 1960s in Germany went the same way as those in the other imperialist countries.*

man Left today.

After the fascist military putsch in Turkey in the 1980s, Turkish workers in Germany began to organize themselves and took to the streets in protest. However, cooperation between the German Left and the Turkish comrades remained limited, as the goings-on in their respective homelands were always the main focus of all migrants’ political movements. The many schisms between groups

Mobilizing was concentrated around single-faceted issues: squatting, the anti-war movement, or anti-atomic power initiatives. International anti-imperialist solidarity was pushed to the periphery. The largest social movements at the time were those protesting against nuclear power plants and NATO military outfitting. These social movements were not led, however, by forces which viewed capitalism as the source of these evils—they were led by those who would place socialism on the same level as capitalism, using dubious terms such as “arms race.” Thus, the movements were politically disarmed. Those who were not willing to make these comparisons were quickly repressed.

The start of the 1980s was marked by a stark increase in the influence of neofascism within the (soccer) Hooligan scene. As a reaction, “anti-fascist” Hooliganism was developed, which almost exclusively understands fascism in connection with (neo)Nazis, and did not and does not acknowledge—

or even denies—the connection between fascism and capitalism. This understanding (or lack thereof) has led to the continued degeneration among the German Left today.

and splinter organizations that arose also played a detrimental role. (For example, it should be noted that per a request made by the Left Party to the federal government, it has been reported that there are at least 5,000 Turkish secret service agents in Germany.)

The end of the German Democratic Republic signaled not only the death of a state, but an end to their scientific apparatuses, their culture, and their counter-intelligence efforts. Whether people “liked” the state or not, it was, perhaps unbeknownst to them, a sort of orientation point as an actually-existing socialist state. With its downfall, the way was made open for an imperialist offensive which encompassed all areas of German society, from the military to its economic branches.

The Socialist Unity Party (SED) transformed itself into the social-democratic Left Party, the membership of the DKP shrank from 40,000 members to less than 4,000, and under the guidance of the secret services, fascist organizations sprung up in every corner of the country. Mass unemployment in the newly formed states (which were carved out of former East German territories) provided fertile ground for these activities.

After the decimation of the GDR, the contemporary consensus by western left academics is that communism had been defeated once and for all. Within the German Left, ideological concepts that are principally anti-communist have been propagated: This can be seen with the “anti-nationals” (Antinationalen) who project the reactionary character of German nationalism onto movements across the entire world, making themselves the enemies of all anti-colonialist, anti-imperialist national liberation struggles. In place of a scientific approach

to writing history, historical revisionism has become the norm. Through the propaganda offensives waged against socialism, the Soviet Union, the GDR, Cuba, Viet Nam, and the DPRK, conceptions of “totalitarianism” were adopted as the accepted analytic theory. The downplaying of the accomplishments of the Soviet Union, of its citizens, and of the Red Army has led to certain groups (which claim to be communist) considering the USA to be the main liberators of Europe, and they propagate and support the Apartheid politics of Israel. These groups obviously have large financial resources, which are used in the name of German-Israeli cooperation to consolidate Western hegemony. Since the end of the decade 2000-2010, these organizations have dominated the student movements of entire cities.

### *After 1945, German chauvinism was made possible, maintained, and expanded via the US occupiers*

Such groups’ behavior has grown increasingly aggressive and violent towards any organizations which support socialism, international anti-imperialism, and national liberation struggles. Proof of this was the deafening silence from “leftists” as the Social Democratic-Green coalition government organized the NATO invasion and subsequent destruction of Yugoslavia. During the war in Iraq (2003), spontaneous waves of protests with tens of thousands of demonstrators formed — mostly made up of young people, who had a strong emotional reaction against war and mass murder — but there was no possibility for

continual, anti-imperialist work guided by a socialist outlook. Our forces were too weak.

Idealist humanism guides the broad protest movements of today, as can be seen in those movements regarding climate change or those demanding the acceptance of refugees within the EU — refugees who are fleeing NATO-led wars, though the causes of said wars remains obfuscated. The slogan of a nation-wide refugee organization, “We are here, because you are destroying our countries,” falls on deaf ears across Germany.

Today we are an absolute minority within Germany. The NATO-EU war against the People’s Republics in Donbas, the war against Syria, and the war preparations being made against Russia and China—in the face of all these, the German Left is either disinterested or clueless, to the point that they even carry and support imperialist aggressions to a degree. It should be noted that Germany is the richest country in Europe with mild living conditions, and as a result the “Left” has immersed itself in intellectual excess and handles political struggle as if it were a game. All the while, the proletariat and those in precarious living situations have turned towards right-wing organizations and parties such as the Alternative for Germany (AFD), by whom they feel themselves to be represented.

After 1945, German chauvinism was made possible, maintained, and expanded via the US occupiers, leading to Germany’s dominating role within the EU. So long as this remains unchanged, no truly socialist revolution can take place here. Even in the face of the current clear success of Chinese socialism, few here in Germany find it possible to recant on the chauvinism. A phrase used by Wilhelm II remains

all too pertinent today: “The world will be better off when it adopts the German way” (*Am deutschen Wesen soll die Welt genesen*). One can only really understand just how true this is if they are familiar with everyday German life.

Internationally-minded, anti-imperialist work will therefore remain the province of small groups of activists for the foreseeable future. Even explosive or catastrophic military, economic, or political events, or any social changes arising therefrom, will not change that—neither radically nor at all.

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## What Happened to Bernie?

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**Written by RAS Cadre**

Earlier this year, Bernie Sanders came incredibly close to winning the Democratic Primary. His supporters will argue until the end of time that, if Bernie Sanders had won this nomination, he would have gone on to defeat Donald Trump and become America’s first Socialist president.

This is purely wishful thinking, and betrays a total ignorance of the limitations of American democracy. While Bernie Sanders did a remarkable job of bringing a certain, limited, and defanged class consciousness into the mainstream, he could never have been seated as president, or if he was he could never have accomplished his more ambitious programs. The political establishment erected a thousand obstacles against him throughout his candidacy. The better Bernie performed, the further the establishment bent its own rules to choke him. To properly understand this battle first against, and then for the Democratic political establishment, one must first

understand the internal composition of both the Democratic Party and the American government as a whole.

The Democratic Party is arguably the oldest continually existing governing political party in the world,<sup>1</sup> and it has changed considerably since its founding in 1828. To understand its current trajectory, one only needs to look as far back as the 1970s and the beginning of neoliberalism.

Domestic deindustrialization had already been underway throughout that decade when the election of Reagan's leadership hyper-accelerated the loss of industrial jobs in the core of the US empire.<sup>2</sup>

This process of exporting American industry to forcibly underdeveloped countries that manufacture goods for the lowest price eliminated millions of American jobs and passed the savings up to corporate owners. The Democrats, in what would become a characteristic move for decades to come, shifted to the right in order to stay relevant in the new paradigm. So-called stagflation had struck the economy and imperiled the rate of profit—that is, the rate at which capitalists could expect a return on their income. The first group in the US empire to feel this pinch were the labor aristocracy and the petit-bourgeois managers of the “middle class.” Capitalism suffers from internal contradictions that continuously lessen the rate of profit over time and capital appears to become less productive. Although this is not technically true, the capitalists feel as though it is, and search for ways to boost the flagging rate of profit, including cutting wages and benefits,

and going to war.

In the 1990s, Bill Clinton passed the infamous “North American Free Trade Agreement” (NAFTA), a continuation of the neoliberal economic policies initiated by Carter and championed by Reagan. Traditionally, the Democrats had found a strong base in corrupted labor unions run by labor aristocrats reaping the benefits of

betraying their fellow laborers. After gutting labor unions via deindustrialization, the Democrats looked for new financing and support from the same capitalist class that Reagan had enriched.<sup>3</sup> This change of constituency from one in which the bourgeoisie were tempered by the proletarian and predominantly petit-bourgeois class entirely to the financial bourgeoisie



## Revolutionary Poetry

Written by RAS Cadre

### *It Starts*

It starts slowly.  
A broken nail, a small burn,  
loss of sleep trickling across days-  
building up and up-  
like an inside out compass.

Then it snaps into place.  
Bloody fingers.  
Larger burns.  
Alcohol replacing blood.  
Blow on every surface.  
You try to say "no! no!  
I can't do it anymore.  
I'll take a different job.  
I'll tutor kids in China,"  
but all the kids in the whole world  
already have their own tutors.

Interesting how  
all the tutor's parents  
own their homes,  
and how my mother still works  
more hours per week, than she's  
spent years on this earth.

1. "The Democratic Party, founded in 1828, is the world's oldest political party" states Kenneth Janda; Jeffrey M. Berry; Jerry Goldman (2010). *The Challenge of Democracy: American Government in Global Politics*. Cengage Learning. p. 276. ISBN 9780495906186.

2. Neil Smith, *Deindustrialization and regionalization: Class alliance and class struggle*, Papers of the Regional Science Association, 10.1007/BF01940128, 54, 1, (113-128), (1984).

3. Kramer, Curtlyn. "Vital Stats: The Widening Gap between Corporate and Labor PAC Spending." *Brookings*, Brookings, 30 Mar. 2017, www.brookings.edu/blog/fivegov/2017/03/31/vital-stats-corporate-and-labor-pac-spending/.

forms the foundation of the modern Democratic party.

The big players in today's Democratic Party—Nancy Pelosi, Steny Hoyer, Chuck Schumer—all entered politics in the early 1980s. Their entire history with the party has been shaped by neoliberalism. They control the party as an old guard, always beholden to financial interests. They maintain their positions at the top of a party that receives billions of dollars in corporate donations. Wealth inequality in America has only grown worse since the Democrats abandoned their (admittedly tenuous and largely illusory) commitment to the working class.<sup>4</sup> With only two contending political parties, the working class had to make tough decisions.

Some sought representation from the Republicans, who appealed to their cultural conservatism and convinced them that any personal misfortune was a result of not working hard enough. Pointing to poverty as a result of immigration, crime, human nature, etc. was a massive strategic victory for Republicans, creating false consciousness in the minds of millions of workers. Democrats' unwillingness to center and uphold class consciousness allowed the concept to fall out of popular favor entirely. The

vast majority of disaffected however, simply stopped voting and joined the ever-growing sector of the US imperial population that felt unrepresented in imperial politics. Now after years of worsening economic conditions, a lot of younger Democrats would like to see a return to class-conscious (though still anti-communist and imperialist) politics.<sup>5</sup> It is worth noting that these "class-conscious" Democrats more closely resemble the fascist class-collaborationists of early fascism, such as the Strasser Brothers, than any true people's party.

The "Progressive" Democrats are engaged in a power struggle for the helm of the Democratic party. On one side is a group of millionaires who have been entrenched by neoliberal politics for 40 years

and are backed by extremely powerful monopoly corporations, and on the other is a small group of hopeful young Democrats who desire a more equitable distribution of resources, but lack a coherent materialist analysis. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Ilhan Omar, and Bernie Sanders do, in all likelihood, want to see material improvements in the lives of Americans, but they are blinkered bourgeois politicians whose understanding of politics is (mis)informed by a liberal framework. The task of this progres-

sive wing is to utilize grassroots funding and the labor of unpaid volunteers to overturn the rule of the Old Democrats, who hold the majority of power in the party.

Imperial politicians, particularly Democrats, stress the importance of voting as if it were the beginning and end of one's political responsibility. Limiting desire and ability is essential to maintaining the status quo. If people show up every two to four years to vote and don't think about it the rest of the time, they'll never realize just how American elections are rigged in a dozen different ways. It is always the most marginalized, the colonized populations, who have the most to gain, who are directly affected. The closure polling places in poor and colonized neighborhoods, removing voters from the registry, throwing away mail-in ballots—the list goes on. In addition, here are just a few of the ways in which the Democratic National Committee, along with the media, has placed their entire fist on the scale to prevent Bernie's nomination:

In the second primary debate the moderators were widely accused of using Republican talking points to pit the "progressive" candidates against the regressive ones.<sup>6</sup> A repeated focus of the primary was "electability," a ludicrous measure by which the candidates are judged on their capacity to appeal to the bourgeois financiers and industrialists, not the every-day population. This pattern continued into the ninth debate, which featured Lester Holt addressing Sanders [directly] about how  $\frac{2}{3}$  of Americans would be uncomfortable with a socialist president.<sup>7</sup>

The most egregious example of election fraud was the Iowa caucus. American caucuses are incredibly undemocratic. They require partici-

4. Stone, Chad, et al. "A Guide to Statistics on Historical Trends in Income Inequality." Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 11 Feb. 2020, [www.cbpp.org/research/poverty-and-inequality/a-guide-to-statistics-on-historical-trends-in-income-inequality](http://www.cbpp.org/research/poverty-and-inequality/a-guide-to-statistics-on-historical-trends-in-income-inequality).

5. Wehner, Peter. "The Democratic Party Is Radicalizing." *The Atlantic*, Atlantic Media Company, 3 Apr. 2019, [www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2019/04/progressivism-making-democrats/586372/](http://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2019/04/progressivism-making-democrats/586372/).

6. Nolan D. McCaskill (July 30, 2019). "Moderates go after progressives in Democratic debate." *Politico*. Retrieved July 30, 2019.

7. Wulfsohn, Joseph A. (February 19, 2020). "Bernie Sanders challenges NBC moderator over question about unfavorable poll on socialism: 'Who was winning?'" *Fox News*. Retrieved February 20, 2020.



pants to put their lives on hold during a weeknight, and the highest participation ever recorded for the Iowa caucus was about 16% of registered Democrats.<sup>8</sup> This is meant to represent the will of the people? Not half of the people, not a third of the people, but a paltry 16% at its best? Even if we pretend that the caucus system is worth keeping, Democrats found their way around following their own rules. This year, for the first time in 76 years, pollsters decided to withhold the poll that is customarily released immediately before the caucus.<sup>9</sup> The given reason was that Pete Buttigieg had his name omitted from a single phone call during the telephone polling. The results of this poll were Sanders leading with 24%, with Warren as a distant second (18%) and Buttigieg and Biden with 16% and 13%, respectively. Such a minor error is obviously inconsequential, but the political establishment will break any and all of its own rules when there is conclusive evidence that people support leftist candidates and policies, even milquetoast social imperialists.

The caucus calculation was done via an app called IowaRecorder, developed by the ominously-named “Shadow, Inc.” The app, which was essentially just a way of moving information securely that any encrypted text app could do, underperformed. Results took weeks to trickle out. Yet, somehow, precincts where Buttigieg did well were able to report those results immediately and without problem. This prompted Buttigieg

to declare himself the winner, which the media, wholly owned by the ruling class, dutifully reported. He was awarded 12 delegates to Bernie’s 9, even after it came out that Bernie won the popular vote. The company that developed the Shadow app is itself owned by a larger corporation, Acronym connected to high level Democrats.<sup>10</sup> I encourage our readers to investigate this themselves. All of this is much more egregious than the electoral confusion of Bolivia’s 2019 elections, which the US seized upon to justify a military coup against Evo Morales.

The Iowa caucus farce aside, the rest of the primary process is also frustrating and demoralizing to anyone who actually believes in the myth of American democracy. Bernie went on to win New Hampshire and Nevada, and then a Biden victory in South Carolina prompted the entire the liberal media to throw themselves at his feet: around the clock coverage that neglected to mention Biden’s obvious dementia, continued attacks on Bernie’s electability, and further debates that were obviously skewed towards Biden and against Sanders.<sup>11</sup> While the liberal media produced constant attacks to wear down Bernie, the other Democratic Party players focused on delivering the kill shot.

Immediately before Super Tuesday, Buttigieg, Klobuchar, and Yang all dropped out and endorsed Biden. Buttigieg was doing far better than Biden until South Carolina, yet for some reason felt compelled to drop

out and make way for the Democrats’ newly crowned king. No candidate who was doing as well as Buttigieg has ever conceived of dropping out immediately before Super Tuesday, but a phone call from Obama was all it took to make Pete bend his knee.<sup>12</sup> That was essentially it for Bernie Sanders. There were a few more primaries that Biden carried with 100% manufactured momentum. If the tricks they pulled hadn’t worked, they’d simply produce more. There is nothing that Bernie Sanders could have done to win the presidency, because the ruling class would never allow it. Remember, too, that this was a relatively mild left-leaning Democratic they attacked and destroyed, not a radical socialist. The name “socialist” was applied to him as an attack to discredit simple wealth-sharing schemes that, a century ago, the US empire would have happily enacted to keep class-peace while it exploited other, colonized peoples.

I’ve spent my case so far focused on the mechanical details of how the election was stolen, but another key question is why it had to be this way. The US is intentionally organized so that those with capital decide everything. US corporations have dictated state foreign policy for over a hundred years. The US empire invaded Hawaii for pineapples, Guatemala for bananas, and the Guano islands for, you guessed it, guano. A government that is owned by the rich could never allow the working class to decide its own affairs. That’s why foreign policy has never been a point of contention in

8. Ella Nilsen, Tara Golshan. “The Extremely Small Number of Votes It Takes to Win the Iowa Caucuses, Explained.” *Vox*, Vox, 13 Nov. 2019, [www.vox.com/2019/11/13/20953263/what-it-takes-to-win-iowa-caucuses-explained](http://www.vox.com/2019/11/13/20953263/what-it-takes-to-win-iowa-caucuses-explained).

9. Lerer, Lisa; Martin, Jonathan; Grynbaum, Michael M. (February 1, 2020). “Des Moines Register Poll of Iowa Caucusgoers Abruptly Shelved.” *The New York Times*. Archived from the original on February 2, 2020. Retrieved February 2, 2020.

10. Newcomer, Eric, et al. “What Is Shadow Inc, the Startup Behind Iowa Election App Fiasco?” *Bloomberg.com*, Bloomberg, 4 Feb. 2020, [www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-02-04/startup-behind-faulty-iowa-election-app-linked-to-top-democrats](http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-02-04/startup-behind-faulty-iowa-election-app-linked-to-top-democrats).

11. Bradner, Eric, and Dan Merica. “5 Takeaways from the Biden vs. Sanders Debate.” *CNN*, Cable News Network, 16 Mar. 2020, [www.cnn.com/2020/03/16/politics/debate-recap/index.html](http://www.cnn.com/2020/03/16/politics/debate-recap/index.html).

12. Zabiegalski, Robin. *Did Obama Encourage Buttigieg and Klobuchar to Endorse Biden?*, 2020, [www.msn.com/en-us/news/politics/did-obama-encourage-buttigieg-and-klobuchar-to-endorse-biden/ar-BB10LvDj](http://www.msn.com/en-us/news/politics/did-obama-encourage-buttigieg-and-klobuchar-to-endorse-biden/ar-BB10LvDj).

any election in our lifetimes. War and imperialism are not on the ballot; they are an immutable fact of US politics. The empire has had soldiers in the Persian Gulf for 20 years, spanning 3 presidents, and the stated mission is as vague and nebulous as when they arrived. This isn't because the government is incompetent, or because the "enemy" is too tough-- it's because the US profits from destabilizing entire regions, then selling weapons to combatants. It's because the empire collapsed the Iraqi government and bombed the entirety of their industry, to transform Iraq into a market that needed US capital and commodities. These highly extractive policies benefit the US economy in ways of which citizens are not even aware, and that is at the heart of why the US could never really function as a democracy. The government relies on an uninformed populace that is easy to manipulate.

Another example is American immigration policy. The empire allows a large volume of illegal immigrants to overstay their visas, or otherwise work here illegally. Business owners pay less than minimum wage so they can improve their profits, and many of immigrants also pay into social security and other programs without ever seeing the benefits. If the government wanted to, it has the legal authority to expel them all out tomorrow, but it doesn't. It wants them to come here, but only as a permanently exploited underclass. We have all heard the Democratic slogan for permitting undocumented workers to stay in the US: "Who else will work so hard for cheap doing jobs most US workers don't want?" which is what "they're integral to the economy" actually means.

To squeeze the most out of immigrants, the US state and its masters entice them to come here and work, but

don't treat them as citizens. So while illegal immigrants may make more money here than they would in their own countries, they remain prisoners to a system that exists to wring value out of desperate people. Amnesty for illegal immigrants is a somewhat popular position among Americans, but the function of the economy relies in part on the systemic abuse of illegal immigrants. If Americans were allowed a functioning democracy, there are hundreds of similar systems of oppression that might be shut down. The ruling class cannot risk this.

Electoral politics utilize a veneer of "democracy" to provide a protective coat for monopoly capitalism. When capital controls politics, it wipes away

any individual's ability to participate in the political process. The sheer weight of capital dwarfs any individual vote. In essence, the US electoral system operates like the US stock market: big firms drive the major shifts, while the profusion of small players merely serves to allow the firms to gain better leverage by diminishing the number of shares they need to control. It has been this way since the industrial revolution, and before that it was controlled by the planters and slavers.

Only through communism, and the abolition of the unjust systems of property, can we ever earn our freedom.

## Blood and Fire and Love – Revolutionary Non-fiction



**Written by RAS Cadre**

There is a tradition, among the poor, of having a child before the age of eighteen. Maybe it's because we never know how long we'll live, or because we love too fast and too easily. I am the youngest of four, born to the daughter of an Irish immigrant. I had my own son when I was fifteen. All I remember from the hospital is the lavender scent of disinfectant. The rest is a twisted mess of blurred lights, a newborn's taut cry, nurses and doctors scurrying, and that thick milky film covering my son's pale body.

The months before were wracked with fear and anxiety. Pre-term labor left my partner bed-ridden for months. We were permitted a single walk each day, and we used it to wander the hospital grounds. She was confined to a wheelchair, and I her chauffeur. She was sixteen.

When my second child was born, the anxiety of new parenthood was replaced with the anxiety of unpaid rent, electricity, and water. We were on our own by then. The phantom of hospital lavender was still with me, and I realized what it was: not the sharp astringent of cleaner, but the shadow of poverty.

Eventually, the memories of my mother cleaning table tops with an off-white towel at a rundown cafe found their way into a mortar and pestle with memories of my own. Those of long weekends plating food I couldn't afford for people I was hidden away from were then ground with the salt of marxism, and I finally saw what the world really was.

I see now what needs to be done.

I see blood, and fire, and love, and laughter too.



## Revolutionary Poetry

Written by RAS Cadre

### A Sky of Deepest Blue

A sky of deepest blue  
Filled with fleets of white monoliths  
Their heading set with a nice summer breeze

The breeze brings with it the memories of generations  
Told to them by the trees as they rustles their leaves  
Of nights as bright as day  
Of days as dark as night

How did we survive such times?  
How do we survive now?  
How will we survive?

Clouds drift lazily above  
Like stray ships lost in the currents  
Casting shadows upon the past  
Upon a the great steppes

We look upon the deeds of four generations ago  
The trees spin stories of great struggle  
As the breeze rustles their leaves  
Of great joy  
Of darkest night  
Of true horror  
Of true suffering  
Liberation came  
Joy swelled in peoples hearts  
The people rebuilt

Once more  
We face the darkest nights  
For some this darkness has already come  
For liberation we must constantly struggle

For in my heart  
I know we will succeed  
For our futures are ours  
The hopes and dreams of humanity lay upon our shoulders  
For they rest on solid foundation  
For we have survived  
For in my heart I know liberation and restoration is at hand

## Red Science Update

Written by RAS Cadre

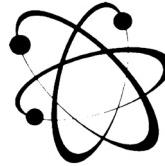
This month, researchers at the University of Arkansas confirmed that layering two wafers of graphene creates energy through Brownian Motion, which can be used in low energy electronics like a sensor or clock. Scientists believe that an array of wafers will power a light bulb and may be upscaled to run everyday electronics. Graphene was once thought to be the high-tech material that would give us the material science to live in space, but it turns out it may be more useful as a microchip sized battery. What this may mean for us as Communists is that, as this technology expands and commands market space, we can take advantage of the liberatory effect such a power source may offer. Graphene can be produced as simply as using a strip of tape and a small cube of graphite. The tape captures graphite atoms that become graphene as the carbon dust is collected. Once the graphene is one atom thick, the tape can be dissolved with a chemical solution leaving behind the graphene wafer, which includes one diode per carbon atom. Placing two wafers at opposing charges creates a bipolar system. When the two diodes interact they may create limitless, clean energy. Since this phenomenon defies the Laws of Conservation of Motion, it's still being studied. The results of further progress may change everything about existing energy grids, and for us it could mean power manufactured from a plentiful source that is separate from the municipal generator and corporate infrastructure. Energy liberation would be a major advantage that increases security and furthers party development. A material like

graphene wafers providing that type of energy will change how infrastructure is designed and deployed. Being cognizant and opportunistic about these scientific developments lends us options for strategic planning.

Another scientific development built on the failure of previous experiments is the observation of two forms of non-equilibrium matter interacting in a superfluid of liquid helium. This so-called 5th state of matter is

proposed to solve the problem that quantum computing necessitates storing the machinery at extremely low temperatures. Non-equilibrium matter, also called time crystals, interact and produce energy at room temperature. Drawn to its conclusion, time crystals are a threat. This puts the Capitalists closer to a predictive computer. Time Crystals in regular production reduces the heat constraint of the computing equipment. The spec-

ulation is that these crystalline formations in four dimensions will power quantum computers, and because of their non-equilibrium state, the time crystals will create an energy field that verges upon perpetual. These systems will have massive predictive power, if completed. Monitoring the developments of time crystal technology is prudent for our security.



# Revolutionary Dual Power –

## Food Aid, the Mass Meeting, and the Red Militia.

Written by RAS Cadre

Throughout the long and brutal ebb of its history, the United States' settler-empire has never felt closer to collapse. It has completely isolated itself on the world stage and now stands alone amongst all nations in refusing to look the COVID-19 pandemic in the face. The bulwark of the capitalist West has always served to thwart the revolution, wherever it rears its head; but now the revolution brews within its very heart. This is the hour for communists to seize on the tottering empire's failings and, by leveraging them, destroy it. The contradictions of capitalism are not subsiding. Indeed, they are only intensifying as the crisis continues.

We have entered the empire's terminal phase. It will not survive this with any semblance of its current form. As the contradictions sharpen, it will be forced to take more and more drastic measures to survive. During these tacking and weaving periods, it will be more vulnerable than ever before. The systems of ideological reproduction are failing. Social reproduction,

the continuation of the social norms of yesterday into tomorrow, is collapsing.<sup>1</sup> The mask of Western capital has slipped to the white precariat and the slender stratus of the white proletariat, traditionally among its strongest supporters. They have been *publicly proclaimed to be disposable*. The rate of profit is endangered not only by the composition of capital shifting toward a greater and greater inorganic concentration,<sup>2</sup> but by the failing markets themselves as COVID-19 shuts down production, cuts GDP, and destroys stockpiled capital of all forms.<sup>3</sup>

The big capitalists, the only ones who will be standing with positive money-capital and productive capital when the market crisis finally takes hold, will need labor. Labor is re-

quired to circulate capital and create new value. How will they get it? Everyone will be sick, homeless, destitute. This will create a situation of extreme desperation; a “reserve army of labor”<sup>4</sup> that is many times larger than the remainder of the working population. The big capitalists will want to leverage this army to work their factories, fields, and supply lines. However, this will require them to bolster their police power, to deploy the police as labor-enforcement and protectors of private property.

*As Hoovervilles spring up across the country, as the mass of workers are made unemployed and houseless, the capitalists will need an increasingly large police force to stand against them. The settler state's garrison-police, al-*

1. Critically, the social reproductive function of schools and education has been challenged by the COVID-19 crisis. The capitalists are scrambling to address how they will resolve this problem. Sending people back to school will kill them, but failing to send them back to school will leave millions of unoccupied children, teens, and young adults to discover the world for themselves, potentially without the training and indoctrination of their capitalist masters.

2. One of the “traditional” crises that causes the fall of the rate of profit.

3. While the destruction of material capital is often a bolster to the declining rate of profit, in this instance the destruction of capital does not come in the form of ruined machinery due to warfare, but rather the destruction of “stored value” capital, that is, money capital. As the GDP falls, capital is expended to pay down the “shadow economy,” that is the debt that has been leveraged through marginal lending. This leads to a concentration of this capital in the hands of the debt-holders, the big capitalists. As real wages decline due to unemployment, this then leads to the market seizing; there will be no free money-capital for the laboring classes to spend to purchase goods. The downward spiral will not only freeze the market—it will utterly annihilate capital accumulation except in the case of a handful of the biggest capitalists, who will use the state to shift their losses *entirely on the public*.

4. Karl Marx, *Capital Volume 1*, (London: Penguin Classics, 1990) 781 et seq.

ready despised by the colonized nations within the empire, will exercise the naked power of class domination. The only solution to the problems of the big bourgeoisie will be to force people back to work, while at the same time starving the most troublesome and politically advanced members of this new reserve army into submission.

This signals the final transition from a bourgeois democracy to a bourgeois dictatorship, and will be accompanied by the rejection of any pretense of popular democracy from the ruling clique. This clique may be comprised of Democrats, Republicans, or even the Joint Chiefs of Staff, but their true nature will be the same no matter who holds the position. They will have created a permanent position for the bourgeois dictatorship, an end to even the pretense of fair elections, and the institution of mass repressive violence on a scale unseen in the imperial core for a century. On Aug 8, 2020, President Trump issued an executive order bypassing the constitutional requirements of the US House and Senate to extend eviction relief, extend unemployment relief, and student debt relief. This is an important milestone on the government's route toward power consolidation and integration of the *Führerprinzip*: the concentration of as much power as possible in as few offices as possible, all directly surrounding, orbiting, or the *Führer* (leader) and his direct circle.<sup>5</sup>

### Dual Power

Dual power is the existence of a revolutionary government *inside the*

*bourgeois state*. It is not based on law or parliaments, but on the direct seizure and action of the revolutionary classes. It requires the direct arming of the whole revolutionary class. The final expression or exercise of dual power is the replacement of bourgeois government officials with revolutionary leadership or the exercise of special oversight over those officials by the revolutionary classes organized as revolutionary parties.<sup>6</sup>

Specifically, dual power encompasses the creation of an entirely new mode of governance. It is a *class dictatorship*, one in which the proletarian class has access directly to governmental power without the intervening function of a bourgeois parliament. Further, dual power in the US Empire must be bolstered by a kind of *national power*. National self-determination being key to undermining and destroying the empire, national self-determination being the spark that has ignited the world-revolutionary flame of the June Uprising, special consideration must be made for the interests of internally oppressed nations when establishing this dual power.

*What does dual power actually consist of?*

We are not Blancists, we do not stand for the seizure of power by a minority. We are Marxists, we stand for proletarian class struggle against petty-bourgeois intoxication, against chauvinism-defencism, phrase mongering, and dependence on the bourgeoisie.<sup>7</sup>

Dual power consists of the actual arming of the proletarian revolution. We must prepare the masses to the point where they may exercise their own strength. That strength is recognized by the institution of a proletarian party with the characteristics of the oppressed nationalities which are participating in this uprising.

The US Empire is uniquely situated. Dual power has only rarely been constituted within its borders, and that power was quickly defeated.<sup>8</sup> There has never been a proletarian revolution in a settler-state of the imperial core. Such a revolutionary movement is beset by special challenges. The hostility of great swathes of oppressor-nation labor aristocrats and petit-bourgeoisie constitutes a chief obstacle. They reject the very concept of revolution, let alone revolutionary government. Some will come over to the side of the revolution, but by and large they will embrace the settler-fascism that so pervades US culture and work to reinforce their national privilege by combining with the forces of the haute bourgeoisie.

Dual power in the US context must specifically be a *national dual power of the oppressed nations*. It is only through the mobilization of the doubly-oppressed (nationally, economically) that we shall be able to destroy the settler-empire. Thus, dual power consists not only in communities taking directly what they need, but specifically through institutions that serve and empower the most downtrodden communities". While oppressor-nation communities, too, can establish

5. The dismantling of the US Postal Service is another example of the exercise of *Führerprinzip*, as is the constant reshuffling of the cabinet positions and agency leadership to establish those loyal to the central authority. We may also qualify the creation of PACT, a Federal law enforcement agency loyal only to the DoJ and AG Barr, as another extension of that principle.

6. See V.I. Lenin, "The Dual Power," *Pravda* No. 28, (April 9, 1917).

7. *Ibid.*

8. Arguably, the 1877 St. Louis general strike represents the only true instance where a revolutionary commune was established on US soil, and that failed to purge its vacillating leadership of bourgeois and petit-bourgeois elements, which was the cause of its rapid downfall, dismemberment, and disintegration at the hands of the city government and business interests.

extra-state power, in their case, *this only reinforces the power of the state itself.* It is impossible for a white community to build dual power in the empire because such an extra-state organization would *reinforce the structure of the empire.*<sup>9</sup>

Dual power threatens the supremacy of the state. It directs energy toward the revolutionary project. But how can we, as Marxist-Leninist formations, as left orgs, help build and encourage dual power? Any such effort cannot begin with direct seizures. We do not have the capacity, at this time, to fight off the full might of the state.

Dual power began in the Tsarist Empire with the defection of masses of conscripted proletarians from the army. They were “proletarians and peasants in army uniforms.”<sup>10</sup> That is not the composition of the imperial army in the US. We do not have mass defections, spontaneously formed officer’s tribunals, or worker’s councils to attack the hierarchy of the US military from below. We cannot rely on military defection precisely because of our unique situation: membership in the US military is not on a conscripted class-basis. Officers are not drawn from a markedly different class as the rank-and-file.<sup>11</sup> The army is actually composed of a great many class enemies and a smaller number of hostile class traitors.

If we cannot rely on the army, how can we hope to build dual power comparable to that built by the Bolsheviks?

Through an entirely different material process that takes into account the conditions within the modern US empire. Marxism is a science and must always take into account changes in material conditions. Failure to do this is simple dogmatism, and will result in defeat.

Here, we must begin with less confrontational means of constructing dual power than open seizure. At first, we must build mutual aid networks, housing relief, food aid, and legal aid. As stated above, we expect *untold numbers of people to be thrown out of their homes. We expect untold numbers of people to lose whatever food security they have.* These people will form the core of the revolutionary army and will be all-too-eager for the dual power we help organize: dispute resolution, resource management, assistance, and aid.

To do this, parties and orgs must go into colonized communities and settler-proletarian communities both and *actually do the work.* In practice this looks like weekly food distribution. It looks like holding mass meetings. It looks like the distribution of literature. It requires these orgs to bring membership from these masses onboard. This is the identification of the most progressive elements of the masses and unity with them. All efforts should be made to integrate leadership with the oppressed-nation proletarians as quickly, safely, and practically as possible. This will begin

the construction of power outside the traditional systems of the state and help to encourage an abandonment of reform.

To be clear, the construction of dual power in the colonized communities incorporates each of these directives. They should be approached in roughly the following order:

- 1) food aid,
- 2) literature distribution,
- 3) mass meetings,
- 4) housing aid,
- 5) general and criminal legal aid,
- 6) unification of the progressive leaders in the masses with the leadership of the revolutionary organizations themselves, and finally
- 7) the construction of dispute-resolution techniques and avenues within the revolutionary communities that bypasses the bourgeois courts and garrison-police.

Only once this stage has been completed can we hope to move toward what, for the Bolsheviks was the first step of dual power, and what for us will be the second: community self-defense.<sup>12</sup>

*A note on the so-called lumpenproletariat:*

This class-fraction has often been defined as encompassing the disabled, the houseless, and the criminal. This is not a useful analytical tool and is one of the ways in which the RAS departs from mainstream Marxist thought. The proletariat encompasses all members of the masses who would sell their labor for wages, whether they currently do so or not. The class-fraction of the “lumpenproletariat” therefore should encompass only active criminals engaged in criminal enterprises. The huge houseless population

9. See any number of white militias that have sprung up over the course of the empire’s terminal decline. Amon Bundy provides a useful example. Since the state exists primarily to benefit not just the bourgeoisie, but the entire settler nation, such organizations, rather than challenge state power, simply hasten the transformation of the bourgeois democracy into a bourgeois dictatorship.

10. Lenin, *The Dual Power.*

11. See, e.g., “Demographics of the U.S. Military,” The Council on Foreign Relations, accessed July 13 2020, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/demographics-us-military>

12. For a more thorough understanding of the RAS plan to build the first stage of dual power, see the RAS Cadre’s, *The Road Ahead*, July 2020.

in the empire, and the houseless population yet to come as a result of the COVID pandemic, is not only ripe for propagandizing, but also represents a base of power for the construction of dual power.

That means this effort cannot be focused merely on communities of active laborers. Dual power is not fit only for factory floors. We will not see a strong organization in this country of worker's councils that are fit to undertake revolutionary duties without the support of what some Marxists will label "lumpenproletariat." No, indeed, we must expect revolutionary consciousness to surge up from the oppressed nations throughout their class structure. While we cannot, of course, incorporate organized crime into the revolution,<sup>13</sup> dual power—that is, food aid, housing aid, etc.—can and must be built among the houseless, the unemployed, and the disabled.

Indeed, those thrown out of employment by COVID and those without any steady source of employment prior to COVID have considerable labor-time to contribute to the revolutionary project. Consequently, contrary to the orthodox position,

we expect the initial outreach

to construct dual power not only to reach the so-called lumpenproletariat, but also to *begin there* and to be *initially concentrated among that class-fraction.*

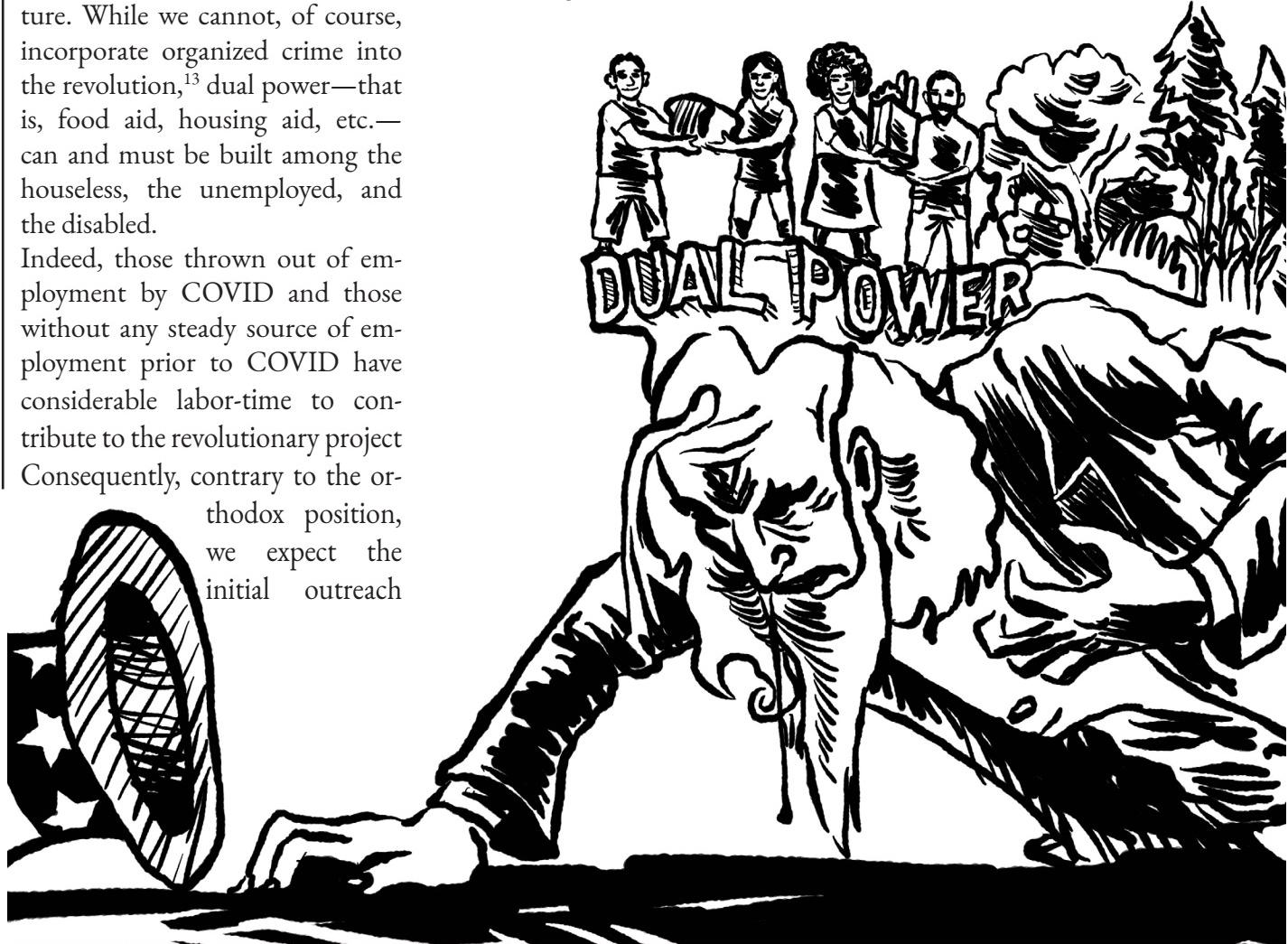
### **Building the Dual Power**

The first step of dual power in the empire must therefore be food and housing aid. This will provide material support to those suffering from houselessness and food precarity. This establishes the revolutionary organization within the community. It prepares the community of colonized proletarians, lumpenproletarians, and even white proletarians to engage in mass meetings.

The second step is the holding of mass meetings to connect with the communities. This includes inviting members of the community to speak, posing specific questions to the community, and disseminating theory. Thus, dual power will flow first from food and then from communication. Finally, it must culminate in the third step: the formation of the Red Militia.

### **Community Self-Defense and the Red Militia**

The second phase of organizing dual power must be to establish armed community self-defense squads among the colonized communities, to train them, and to establish systems whereby these community militias will be



13. Organized criminal organizations are generally openly inimical to the people. While the bourgeois government may be tacitly against them, arresting membership and engaging in large "busts" for positive publicity, they often play the same kind of repressive role in the lives of the masses as the bourgeois government does.

held accountable to their communities. While the concept of community militias is not a new one, it has historically held a *reactionary* position within the US Empire.<sup>14</sup> White settler-militias have traditionally been used as an expression of oppressor-nation power over Indigenous and colonized people.<sup>15</sup>

Thus, our construction must explicitly reject white settler-militias. To this end, we also reject the simple formulation that “communities must police themselves.” While it is true that most of the US imperial garrison-police in urban centers are composed of members that live outside the region they police, it remains the case that any simplistic self-organizing police would result in enclaves of predominately oppressor-nation communities arming themselves and forming expressions of oppressor-nation power.

We reject any logic which produces this outcome. It is not enough to grant self-determination to all communities. White, oppressor communities *already possess self-determination*. These communities must be patrolled not by the reactionary elements within them, but by trained political cadres who are prepared to suppress reactionary elements rather than empower them.

Instead, we must organize communities based on the national self-determination of oppressed nations. White communities do not need protection from the garrison-police. By focusing the development of community self-defense among those populations that have been deprived of self-determination, we achieve several purposes: 1) to assist the oppressed nations in freeing themselves from the oppressor nation, 2) to combat the violence of the garrison-police and address the

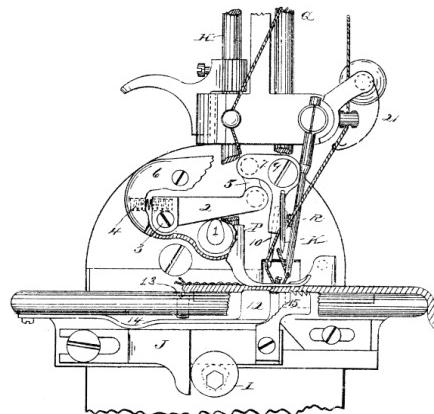
most progressive issue animating the continuing June Uprising, and 3) to lay the groundwork for the next stage of the revolution.

*The destruction of the US settler-state is itself a revolutionary act.*

This is necessary to fulfill communism’s promise of revolutionary self-determination. Throwing off the imperial yoke is always a revolutionary act, no matter what form the new organization of the people takes. It remains our duty to support this revolution-

ary act regardless of that form; however, we should offer our services to help that new organizational form realize the *most progressive, equitable, liberatory* aspect that it can, which will usually mean encouraging communism in the newly freed nations. It bears repeating, however: *even if we merely destroy the current organization of the United States Empire, this is a victory.* Establishing a program of socialist construction within the core would be ideal, but it is *not necessary*. The destruction of the US settler-state is

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**"without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement." -Lenin**



If you have any questions regarding registration or other matters please contact us at [reclamation.and.survival@protonmail.com](mailto:reclamation.and.survival@protonmail.com)

14. This is not to discount the BPP’s progressive, necessary self-defense militias, but rather to highlight the long history of white settler-militias in this country.

15. Indeed, the garrison-police force of the US Empire itself began as white settler-militias.

itself a revolutionary act.

We communists will gain currency within the colonized communities by our work in the first phase of constructing dual power. Communities will begin to know us, and to know that communists can be trusted to act in their interests. Colonized people will have been present at mass meetings, and many of them will, by this stage, be united with our leadership by becoming partners and taking over that leadership.

Once we have progressed to this point, self-defense must be broached at mass

meetings. The necessity to resist the capitalist garrison-police must be hammered home by propaganda, and the masses must be brought into the June Uprising through political education. Those already engaged in the uprising who have revolutionary potential (that is, the most progressive elements of that uprising) should already, by this point, be united with the revolutionary organizations. This will give us the labor, training, education, and mass connections necessary to successfully organize these Red Militias.

These must be organized into groups, platoons, etc. to accomplish two tasks, namely to serve as the local authority of the community, and also to serve as the core of an urban guerrilla force that, while not yet ready to flaunt its defiance of the state, will be preparing to do so.<sup>16</sup>

The purpose of the Red Militias is

to patrol the colonized community and ensure that state agents have no purchase there. They are to expel assessors, rent-seekers, DCF workers, judicial authorities, social workers, and the garrison-police. Even ostensibly neutral or “friendly” state agents should be regarded with extreme skepticism. Reporters should be prevented from entering the colonized commu-

nities unless they agree to surrender their state-centric narratives and provide reporting for the good of the revolution. We must remember that the news conglomerates are nothing more

than the servants of capital and, at the end of the day, they are not our friends.

Not only will the Red Militias protect these communities from outside state influences, they will serve to reinforce the already-existing structures of dual power within them. They will be at the service of the local structures built for dispute resolution, food distribution, housing etc. and place themselves directly at the disposal of the local leadership.

As such, control of the Red Militias must be made subject to the colonized communities they serve. But, their ultimate organization and deployment must be put into the hands of the revolutionary formations that organized them. Initially, these Red Militias will be asked to protect only their own communities. They will be armed, drilled to operate in urban environments, and instructed on the best

ways to drive out the garrison-police. They will be trained in dispute resolution and assist the structures of dual power in ensuring that disputes are resolved *by the colonized communities themselves*, depriving the bourgeois power structures of necessary oxygen and legitimacy.

However, it is only through unified, all-empire action coordinated by a central organ that these Red Militias can become a People’s Revolutionary Army. Thus, while the second phase of building dual power is to establish Red Militias for the colonized and begin to patrol these colonized communities, this is not the end of our revolutionary task. Indeed, it is only the very beginning.

If we can establish a general order, then, to construct dual power we must proceed through tasks in three phases. Phase one: the establishment of dual power, consists of 1) establishing aid to the colonized communities, 2) organizing the colonized communities along lines that do not intersect with the state, to grant them independence from the state’s dispute-resolution and supply channels, 3) invoking mass meetings and educational programs. Phase two: the Red Militias, requires us to: 1) establish the Red Militias, 2) use the Red Militias to secure colonized communities, and 3) place the Red Militias at the disposal of the newly-instituted proletarian-national authorities of the colonized communities.

The Red Militias will then raise their banners and declare themselves a People’s Revolutionary Army.



—Solidarity, Comrades.

<sup>16</sup> Here we must look to the many successful and unsuccessful communist and anti-capitalist guerrilla campaigns throughout history. The mistakes of the RAF should guide us just as Carlos Marighella’s *Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla* (1969) does. Indeed, even the tactics of the enemy in the form of the US Marine Corps’ manual *Wartfighting*, should be considered.

## Harm Reduction and Electoralism

Written by RAS Cadre

This November millions of Americans will participate in a tradition that is part and parcel with the political system of the United States: presidential elections. Ever since George Washington completed his second term in office and stepped down in the style of the Roman dictator Cincinnatus, the idea of a peaceful transition of power from one executive to the next has been heralded as a defining feature of American republicanism. This theater is replayed every four years when the handpicked politicians of both ruling parties are trotted out and displayed against one another as the two options available for the executive role. However, for all the Americans who play their role in this charade, millions will decline out of apathy, defiance, or indecision. This year, perhaps more glaringly than in the past, there is a greater insistence on participating in this election for the purpose of “reducing harm.” Progressives, social democrats, and others push the line that voting for Biden must be done to stop Trump from wreaking havoc and, at least in the short term, save America. If you choose not to vote for Biden, or if you choose not to vote at all, then you are essentially voting for Trump. They will tell you that Trump is the greater of two evils. A Biden presidency is more amenable to organizing. Biden will pass laws to protect vulnerable people. Biden doesn’t embolden bigots. This is what they call harm reduction. This is a myth.

What do people mean when they talk about harm reduction? Ideally, it is the concept of voting for the most progressive candidate to foster a safer

environment for vulnerable groups and for organizers on the broader left. In the current political climate, it is most commonly in reference to stopping the Trump administration from doing damage to the LGBTQ+, Black, and immigrant communities, as well as halting the broader Republican agenda. White supremacy, anti-LGBTQ+ hate, and xenophobia are propagated and emboldened by Trump, they say, so Biden must be elected to counteract this. He may make the smallest of adjustments, he may only reduce harm a small amount, but any amount is better than none. Proponents of the harm reduction argument say a Biden presidency will be a safer environment for organizing towards real change, primarily by fostering an environment more amenable to passing legislation to protect vulnerable people. The reasoning behind this is that a Biden administration can possibly be “pushed left” by organizers and will not stoke sentiments that are antagonistic to organizing in the way the Trump administration does. Another long term benefit touted in support of harm reduction is the nomination of Supreme Court judges. Liberals view the judiciary as a bulwark against the repeal of certain laws with Roe v. Wade being the main example. The fear is that a shift in the judiciary away from liberal ideals puts such laws in jeopardy. Finally, climate change and science denialism are said to be taken seriously by a Biden administration. Moderates are not seen as anti-science and perceived as more likely to foster international cooperation in the form of working with other countries in climate accord conferences.

When examining the idea of harm reduction, especially concerning who perpetuates it and why, one must examine the motives behind it. Those

who promote the idea of harm reduction are generally center or left-of-center on a left-right scale. Scales such as these are often too clean for the reality of politics, but can be helpful in defining broad movements. If the Republicans are a far right party, the Democrats are center-right, progressives are often the “true centrists,” and various radicals make up the true left. Loyal Democrats do not see voting for Biden as reducing harm; they see it as the fulfillment of the Democratic imperative. Thus, the progressives and radicals are those who push the harm reduction line, even though progressives and radicals are not who make up Biden’s voter base. To understand how Biden came to represent harm reduction, we must go back to the Democratic primaries. Those who had general support for Bernie Sanders but were reluctant to go all-in on voting claimed that Sanders was the “compromise candidate,” the last chance for someone who could possibly right the American ship of state before reform was no longer an option. Even some self-proclaimed revolutionaries supported a “diversity of tactics” approach in which a Sanders presidency could provide relief to the working class while slowly dismantling capitalism. This is the same harm reduction line pushed now. However, after his second defeat in as many primaries, Sanders unsurprisingly endorsed Biden and now pushes the line that Biden must be elected to defeat Trump. This shift of support has carried along harm reduction from the progressive base to now a tactic that is used to drum support for Biden. Although this tactic is generally used among progressives and social democrats such as DSA who advocate for a “big tent” united front against Trump, there are other groups ostensibly far-

ther left that have begun to push this tactic as well, especially groups such as the CPUSA. It is important to remember that when discussing harm reduction it is not merely an idea floated about that it is in everyone's best interest to vote for Biden. It is an active political line being developed and enacted by professional political organizers in an effort to advance electoralism, or participation in elections, as a valid form of political work. From social media campaigns to voter registration tables on the street, people are putting time and effort into legitimizing and spreading electoralism for the purpose of harm reduction.

Knowing who advocates for this line, we can begin to examine why people promote it. Those who continue to advocate for electoralism do so because they either truly believe that electoralism is a valid tactic alongside revolution or they are invested in reform and consider Biden a safer choice for the continued existence of the United States. Those who view it as a valid tactic alongside revolutionary work speak of how Marx or Lenin advocated participating in bourgeois politics or how voting is the one way that many people understand how to interact with politics, so it is a tactic of entry. To vote in favor of harm reduction is to hold off the rabid dogs of fascism long enough to create the conditions favorable for revolution. Those who are reformists view harm reduction as a solid tactic of reform, and as such a veritable defense of liberalism. It is a way to legitimize the electoral process by claiming it is still viable for long-term change of existing systems. For them, harm reduction is a defeat of fascism and a turn towards entrenchment of the liberal democratic system. This defense of liberal democracy is not only pertinent to

domestic policy, but international relations as well, such as the aforementioned climate accords. Liberal democracies hold their political ideology as the premier standard for global society, as evidenced by the amount of non-governmental organizations and think tanks that promote western values and cooperation as the pinnacle of progressive global politics. However, such reform can only accomplish so much, and what it does accomplish is woefully inadequate for addressing the root causes of oppression for vulnerable groups. This inadequacy is why the idea that participation in electoral politics is a necessity to reduce harm is a myth, and a harmful one in itself.

*Why is harm reduction a myth?* Because we know the system doesn't work, we know the system is illegitimate, we know the system cannot be reformed. This is a dangerous myth because the groups that are intended to be protected by so-called harm reduction are those that the system has failed time and time again. Biden is the culmination of a system that has systematically targeted and harmed vulnerable people, yet he is tasked with reducing harm? This is also a chauvinist myth—harm reduced for whom? For vulnerable people of the United States alone. Biden and Trump have similar foreign policy lines, and one could say Biden's are more hawkish than Trump's. This is not harm reduction. Biden and Trump both serve the capitalist state, corporations, and an ever-expanding military. Would the carbon footprint of a Biden presidency be smaller than the carbon footprint of a Trump presidency? Can Biden stop deadly hurricanes and wildfires better than Trump? The climate crisis is not a harm that, at this point, can be safely reduced. The time for that has

long passed, not only in Trump's four years, or all the years prior to 2008, but in Obama's eight years as well, during which Biden was part of the administration. This myth is also dangerous because it obfuscates talk about real, substantive, and revolutionary work. When people try to mix revolutionary work with electoralism, they hold them up as equally important. They divert energy and attention away from revolutionary work. One common refrain is that "you can do both!" But the truth is that electoralism has never proved an important thing for those who are vulnerable. It is only a smoke-screen meant to foster legitimacy of the system. Electoralism is also perpetuated because it is what people know and are comfortable with. However, real and substantial change cannot be seen as a comfortable endeavor. It is a disruption of the very systems of comfort that the current system upholds.

In this perpetuation, there are two important questions to ask. They are "what harms can be avoided" and "what does it mean to avoid harm?" Since Trump's presidency has ascended, we have seen what is perceived as an increase in harms for vulnerable people. The primary targets of harm are Black people, immigrants, and the LGBTQ+ community. Police violence, detention camps, and rollbacks of protective laws are the primary harms directed at these people. To reduce these harms should mean to tackle the roots of these harms. Reformation of police, reformation of the immigration system, and enactment of protective laws are how these harms can be stopped or reduced. Thus, faith is placed in the system to be able to handle these changes in such a way that vulnerable people are protected. But can democrats really be trusted to do this? They have been in power for

decades in this country and have consistently failed to address these issues. Why would now be any different? They are one side of the destructive and harmful system that has not only failed to reduce harm but has continually perpetuated it.

Harm reduction is at best a myth and at worst imperialist propaganda. The concept rests upon the assumption that the system is capable of meaningful reform and controllable by the people, even in the short term. Time and again history has proven that this is false. Reforms have come from mass movements of the people, from broad action and demands for change. This is the case regardless of who is in office. The harms faced are systemic harms. They are white supremacist harms and capitalist harms which are fundamentally part of the system. The president is sworn to uphold this system. Fundamental change would require dismantling the basis of the system. For a president to reduce harm, they could no longer be president. Is this really something Biden will do? Of course not. Biden is not accountable to imprisoned folks, houseless folks, people who are starving or being beaten in the streets. He is not accountable to the people. He is accountable to a byzantine system of bureaucrats and oligarchs who control the political apparatus, completely detached from those he purports to serve.

However, we must still address the alternative: Donald Trump. He is the reason we are having this conversation right now. Trump is dangerous! Trump emboldens fascists! Or did fascists embolden Trump? We need to ask ourselves what the greater danger is: a fascist in the open or a fascist wearing a badge, name covered by a thin blue line? Conditions

have worsened in the US because of a myriad of factors, all of which are largely independent of Trump and already existed prior to his presidency. White supremacy, increasingly reactionary fascism, deadly foreign policy, and police action against vulnerable people are all things that existed before Trump. Trump did not appear through spontaneous biogenesis. He is the result of American society. He is a symptom as much as, or even more so than, a cause. The same system that produced a Donald Trump will never reduce his harms. Neither side supports defunding police, much less abolishing them to be replaced by other means. Not even Sanders stood in support of defunding police. The system will never relinquish its hold over power. The fascists in the streets are the same fascists in uniform. Is it harm reduction to put a badge on the person beating and shooting Black people in the street? Is it harm reduction when a trans woman is killed by an agent of the state during a wellness checkup? No matter who leads this system, harms will only be cloaked in legitimacy and shifted onto others through bloody redirection.

The African revolutionary Kwame Nkrumah, in his book *Handbook of Revolutionary Warfare*, states: Throughout the struggle we must recognize and combat enemy attempts to demoralize us. For, in the face of the failure to achieve military solutions against well-organized, broadly-based guerrilla forces, as for example in Vietnam, the enemy as stepped up its efforts in the propaganda war. The aim is: 1) to prevent a liberation movement from getting under way, by destroying it at its source, i.e. by undermining the will to fight, and 2) where revolutionary warfare as actually begun, to conquer it by political means,

i.e. by granting just sufficient political, economic, and social “reform” to encourage all but the so-called “extremists” to abandon the struggle.<sup>1</sup>

Harm reduction through electoralism serves both purposes outlined here. When people put faith into the electoral system, it necessarily removes some measure of faith from its alternatives. When revolutionaries legitimize the system, they undermine their own efforts to destroy that system completely; they sap their own will to fight. Harm reductions are crumbs scattered to vulnerable people to keep them from making more serious and forceful demands. Instead of creating a more suitable environment for revolution, these concessions calm the roiling waters. In doing so, the continuous false promise of reform is upheld and people are told to abandon or at least curb their revolutionary tendencies; harm can always be reduced further. Or you can close your eyes and put your hands over your ears and pretend that the harm is reduced away into the ether instead of loaded onto a plane, flown across the sea, and dropped onto a family 7,000 miles away.